THE

CRITICAL EXAMINATION

OF THE

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

SĀDHU ŚĀNTINĀTHA

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

CHAPTER IV.

The conception of God as the efficient and material cause of the world examined.

Pages.

APPENDIX E.

Occidental Theories about the Absolute.

Pages

CHAPTER V

The Theory of God as the illusory material and efficient cause of the world Examined

---

SECTION I

The Proofs of the attributeless Reality Examined

SECTION II

The Arguments for Absolute Reality Examined

SECTION III

Theory of Causation examined.

Pages

SECTION IV

Cosmic Ignorance Examined.

Pages

APPENDIX F

CHAPTER VI

The Law of Karma Examined.

APPENDIX G

CHAPTER VII

The Idea of the Self.

CHAPTER VIII

Sādhanā

Pages

APPENDIX II

The Doctrine of Avatāra

CHAPTER X.

The Doctrine of the Harmony of all views (समन्वयवाद) Examined.

Conclusion.

CHAPTER IV.

The Conception of God as the efficient and material cause of the World examined.

INTRODUCTION.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that no logically satisfactory explanation of the evolution of the objective world is obtainable from the theory of unmanifested Energy as the material cause. We have also found that the situation is in no way improved by adding the notion of God as the efficient cause regulating the action of *Prakriti*. Other schools of thought laid special emphasis upon the rational difficulty in accounting for the relation between two such independent self-existent realities, namely God and *Prakriti* which is assumed in those systems. These schools of thought attempted to remove this difficulty by conceiving of God and *Prakriti*, not as two realities but as one non-dual reality, the latter being regarded as existing in and for the former. We now proceed to the discussion of this view.

Exposition of the Doctrine.

The world being of the nature of an effect, reason demands an ultimate cause to account for its existence. That cause must be adequate to explain its origination, its continuity of existence and the uniformity and harmony among its phenomena. The ultimate cause must be conceived as of such a nature that the potentiality of the entire universe is present in it. This is the conception of Energy *Prakriti*. As we cannot conceive of the beginning or the

end of the world of phenomena in space and time, the Energy must be conceived as infinite and eternal. Thus it is conceived that *Prakriti* modifies itself without any exhaustion or even diminution of its potentiality. Besides, by the study of the nature of the world-process, we find order and harmony in it. From this we infer that some ideal is operating in the cause. This implies that the cause of the universe is not an unconscious cause, but that a conscious principle is governing the cause. As these effects comprise all derivative existences throughout space and time, this entire universe must be the object of that consciousness. Therefore that consciousness must be without any limitation. This consciousness is the eternal guiding and controlling principle of the Energy. So it must be regarded as eternally the same and therefore without any change or modification. Thus Energy is transforming itself according to the direction of the consciousness which is changeless. As the consciousness is immanent in the very nature of the Energy, and not exercising control over it from outside, there cannot be any separation between them. Each is therefore to be conceived in inseparable relation to and in terms of the other. Thus consciousness is the consciousness immanent in the Energy, and the Energy is the energy belonging to that consciousness (God). What has been called the evolution of *Prakriti* is really the process of His self-manifestation. This Energy or *Shakti* has sometimes been described as His power, sometimes as His will, sometimes as His attribute, sometimes as His nature, and so on. The purport of all such descriptions is that *Shakti* is that through which the Absolute Spirit manifests Himself into a diversified world of finite living and non-living beings without Himself being lost in them. Accordingly God with His *Shakti* is conceived as the efficient as well as the material cause of this universe.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION.

Let us now proceed to the critical examination of the doctrine.

I

Here it may be asked whether the Energy ('*Shakti*') is non-different from God, or different from Him or different as well as non-different from Him.

(a) Non-difference of Energy and God inexplicable.

If Energy is God Himself, then there will be no distinction of Energy and the One having Energy. If there is no difference between the Energy and God, then one should not be called Energy and the other, the seat of Energy. Besides, in such a case there will be virtual denial of Energy and what has been explained as the transformation of Energy will have to be conceived as the transformation of God Himself, who should therefore be admitted to be a changing substance.

(b) Difference of Energy from God Inexplicable.

If Energy is different from God, then it will have to be ascertained, what is the nature of this difference. Does it mean that Energy has existence apart from and independent of the existence of God ? In that case it cannot be called His Energy. What is independent of something cannot be regarded as essentially belonging to that thing. Accordingly if Energy be conceived as a reality distinct from and independent of God, we cannot assert any eternal and inalienable relation between God and Energy. In such a case, if any permanent relationship is to be recognised between them, this relation must be established by

another agency. The recognition of such an agency would again create similar logical difficulties and no solution will be found. But if it is held that Energy has no independent existence, that it exists in, for and by the existence of God, then it has to be ascertained what is its true relation with God and how it is possible for Energy, which is different in essential character from Him, to reside within Him and in permanent relationship to Him. This question we shall discuss at length hereafter.

(c) The Impossibility of the theory of difference-non-difference.

The theory of difference as well as non-difference cannot at all stand unless a way can be found to interpret these two notions viz. difference and non-difference in such a manner that they may not be contradictory to each other. But according to the meanings generally attached to them, these two notions are known to be contradictory and cannot be affirmed of the same thing at the same time. Let us prove this by illustrations. Even when we actually see two moons in the sky, as soon as we are convinced that the one is really non-different from the other, the idea of difference vanishes, and the perceived difference is taken to be illusory. Similarly, the notion of non-difference of the body and the self is negated as soon as there is the knowledge of their difference. In all such cases difference and non-difference contradict each other and the affirmation of the one necessarily implies the negation of the other. (For elaborate refutation—See pages 321-333.)

(d) Energy cannot be different-non-different from God wholly or partially.

Supposing that the relation of difference and non-difference exists together, the question is : Are God and His

Energy, different as well as non-different as a whole or are they different in some parts and non-different in other parts? With regard to the first alternative, the following question arises: Is difference as well as non-difference of whole simultaneous or successive? If there is difference between two entities as a whole at the same time, then to speak of their non-difference is meaningless, because the essence of the two things in that case, will be exhausted in being different. Similarly, if they are entirely non-different, to speak of them as different at the same time would be meaningless. Nor can there be the successive difference and non-difference of two entities as a whole. If the antecedent form remains, then the opposite of it namely the subsequent form will not be, and in case, the antecedent form is lost, then also because of its absence there will not be the subsequent form. That is to say, the two forms which are identical being entirely distinct from the two forms which are different, there will virtually be difference of two entities and non-difference between two other entities. Consequently the same identical thing cannot be regarded as different as well as non-different. Nor can there be partial difference and non-difference between God and Energy, because neither of them is conceived as divisible into parts.

(e) God and Energy cannot be different-non-different through aspects or attributes, essential or non-essential.

It may be said that parts do not necessarily imply divisibility, but may mean only distinction of aspects or attributes within the nature of the entity. The nature of God is admitted to consist of infinite powers and attributes and His Energy also is admitted to be of a complex character. Hence in some of these aspects God and Energy may

be regarded as identical and in others they may be different.

In order to form a correct estimate of this position, it is necessary to have a definite idea of the nature of God, the nature of Energy and the nature of the relation between the two. We shall have occasions to discuss these questions in greater details in the sequel. For the present, it is to be asked, whether Energy is conceived as itself one of the aspects of God, or God and Energy are conceived as two entities having some aspects common to both. If Energy be merely an aspect of the Divine nature, then it has further to be ascertained whether it is the essential aspect or a non-essential aspect of the nature of God. In case Energy be conceived as the essential aspect of God's nature, then it is really non-different from God, and only by logical abstraction it may be thought of separately. In that case non-difference is to be regarded as real, and difference only verbal or conceptual. Further, in that case the transformation of Energy should really mean the transformation of the essential nature of God. The conclusion from such a supposition would be that God is a Being, who is essentially subject to a variety of changes, and that at the time of creation God as a pure self-conscious transcendent Being does not exist. This would of course defeat the purpose, for which the existence of Energy was recognised.

If on the other hand Energy be a non-essential aspect of the nature of God, then, first of all, God is to be conceived as possessing essential as well as non-essential elements in His nature. This would mean that the Divine Nature is not absolutely pure and perfect. It would follow that the essential nature of God cannot shine in the glory of its absolute purity and perfection on account of the limitations

and impurities imposed upon it by the non-essential elements. Secondly, are these non-essential elements eternally present in the nature of God or are they non-eternal? If eternal, how can they be regarded as non-essential and distinguished from the essential elements? All the elements that are present eternally in the nature of God, must be regarded as equally essential, though among themselves they may differ from one another in their characteristics. It may be said that they are the changing aspects of the eternal nature of God, in which there are some unchanging aspects as well. But there is no ground for holding that these unchanging aspects are essential and the changing aspects are non-essential. If this is conceded, then the transformations of the changing aspects also should be construed as the changes in the essential nature of God. That is to say, His entire Godhood should be regarded as changing with the changes of the changeable aspects of His nature. Besides, what is meant by these changes? It would logically mean that certain aspects of Divine nature are destroyed and certain other aspects are produced. That would imply that God, like an ordinary embodied creature, is subject to growth and decay, loss of His former nature and acquirement of new nature, and so on. This is certainly inconsistent with the conception of God. Besides, it is difficult to comprehend how some of the eternal aspects of the nature of the admittedly perfect Being be destroyed or even altered.

If, on the other hand, the non-essential aspects of the Divine nature, said to constitute His Energy, be regarded as non-eternal in His nature, then it has to be explained how they could be added to or superimposed upon the essential nature of God. These non-eternal aspects must either originate from some sort of modification of the

eternal essential aspects of the nature of God or they must come from some external source. In the first case the essential nature of God should be regarded as subject to modification and God should be a changing God. Even if this is admitted, no reason can be found why at any particular period of His eternal life, the process of modification should set in and those non-eternal aspects should be produced. In the second case, the existence of some external source of those non-essential aspects and consequently of the Divine Energy, which consists of them, must be recognised. In that case the Energy will have to be regarded as produced and therefore cannot be regarded as the ultimate material cause of the universe. Besides, the relation between God and that extraneous source of His Energy cannot be logically defined and explained.

Thus we find that if Energy be conceived as an aspect of the Divine nature, the relation between God and Energy cannot be logically and consistently established, and hence it is futile to speak of them as both different and non-different in this sense.

If on the other hand God and Energy be conceived as two distinct entities having some aspects common to both, there is no ground why they should be regarded as non-different and the one should be regarded as belonging to the other. Two different material bodies may have the attribute of materiality common to both, a man and a bird may have the attribute of bipedness common to both; but such common attributes or similar characteristics do not justify us in regarding the objects possessing them as non-different from each other. Existence is an aspect, which is common to all entities; if on that account we regard them as non-different, then everything should be regarded as different as well as non-different from every thing else.

If God and Energy be conceived as partly non-different in such a vague and general sense, no special significance can be attached to this view. In that case God and Energy should be conceived as really different from each other, but both having real existence and some other points of similarity as well. If this view be accepted, the acceptance of Energy as the material cause of the universe would not imply that on that account God is really the material cause of the universe. The true relation between God and Energy should then be separately considered in order to find out how far any modification in the one can be dependent on its relation to the other, and in what way such modification, if possible, will affect the character of each.

II.

Relation between God and Energy Inexplicable.

Now, let us examine what relation can logically be established between God and His cosmic Energy as conceived by the exponents of this view. The primary relations which are generally recognised are conjunction, inherence, identity and 'simple relation' (स्वरूप). Let us see if any of them is applicable here.

(a) Conjunction between God and Energy Inexplicable.

There cannot be any conjunction between God and the cosmic Energy. Conjunction takes place between substances which are independent of one another and brings together two entities which remained apart. Energy is not treated by the advocates of this theory as a substance independent of God or as an entity that can possibly remain apart from

Him. Moreover, conjunction is observed between two measurable substances, that is, between things having parts and non-pervading. There can be no conjunction between two partless things or between one partless thing and another with parts, because conjunction does not pervade the whole extent of its substratum. In different parts of the same ground, the conjunction of pot and its absence are perceived. In the same substratum where there is conjunction in one part, there is negation of it in another part. If conjunction and its absence could remain at the same time in the very same space, then there would be an end of the Law of contradiction e. g. the contradiction of presence and absence. Hence it must be admitted that they can remain in relation to different spaces. But this difference of space is not possible in the partless. What is without parts, i. e. without division or differentiation of parts, cannot be the substratum of conjunction. Since God and Energy are both conceived as without division of parts, the relation between them cannot be of the nature of conjunction.

It may be argued that there can be conditional difference of parts in the partless, and thus make conjunction possible. But if any condition is to create parts in any partless entity, a relation of the partless with the condition must be granted. It must, in other words, be admitted that by being related to the partless entity, the condition specifies it and makes it a conditioned entity with parts. If this is not accepted, then there will be the fault of unwarrantable stretch. To explain: if even without any relation to the partless, the condition will particularise it, then any condition may particularise any entity, because the absence of relation is uniform in all cases. So the relation of the partless with the condition must be recognised. In other words, it has to be acknowledged that a related

entity can alone become the differentiating attribute or condition. Now the question arises what kind of relation can there be between that condition and the partless entity? Is it a case of 'simple relation' (स्वरूप) or that of conjunction? The alleged relation cannot be a 'simple relation'. 'Simple relation' is merely of the nature of the two related terms and as such is identical with them. Hence, it will not differentiate one term from another, so it cannot account for the alleged conditional difference of parts in the partless. The second alternative viz. conjunction, is also not possible because one of the terms to be related is partless. Besides, if it is held that for the conditioning of the partless, the alleged conjunction of condition requires another condition, then that condition will also require another condition, and in this way there will be an infinite regression. Further, in that which is intrinsically partless, there cannot be a portion particularised by another condition, because the relation of condition will also be subject to the same objections. Moreover, the said part being established, the relation of condition with it will be established, and that relation being established, that part will be established; so there will be the fallacy of interdependence. Thus it is shown that for being conditioned, the relation of the condition with the conditioned is required and the relation of the partless with the condition is not possible. Hence two partless entities can in no way be related by means of conjunction. So partless God cannot have the relation of conjunction with the cosmic Energy.

Besides, the conjunction which is an attribute resides in the substratum by the relation of inherence. So it is dependent on inherence. But inherence, it has been proved, is illegitimate. Hence conjunction is disproved.

(b) Inherence between God and Energy Inexplicable.

Thus, the second alternative, namely that God is related to the cosmic Energy by inherence, is also not reasonable. Besides, the terms of inherence are different and the relation itself is different from the terms. But Energy is not taken as different from God. So there cannot be inherence between Energy and God.

(c) Identity between God and Energy Inexplicable.

Now about the third alternative. Here the question is: Does identity include difference or is it of the nature of non-difference? The first is refuted by the rejection of inherence. The second would not prove the cosmic Energy as different from God. Moreover, identity cannot be explained as related to the related terms, nor can it be said to be un-related to them. If identity is asserted as related to its terms, there will be *regressus ad infinitum*. In order to relate the first relation of identity with its substratum and its counterentity, a second relation will be required, in this way to relate the second relation, another relation will be required and so on. If the second relation is of the nature of the first, then there will be interdependence; if the third, then the third also will require another relation to have relation with its terms, and if that other relation is of the nature of the second, then there will be interdependence; if the first, then vicious circle; if the fourth and so on, then infinite regression. Nor can it be said that the identity has no relation with terms at all. In that case it will be no relation. If a non-related entity becomes a relation, then the pot also would become the relation of cloth and its genus. Thus, it is shown that the relation of identity is an unproved thesis, and so there cannot be the relation of identity between God and cosmic Energy.

(d) The relation of 'Swarupa' (स्वरूप simple relation) between God and Energy inexplicable.

The fourth alternative namely the recognition of a 'simple relation' between God and cosmic Energy is equally unsound, because there is no simple relation as we are going to prove below. If the simple relation is of the nature of related terms, then there will be no difference between quality and one having quality; thus there will be an end to the differences in the world and thus there will be no world at all. If the relation is of the nature of related terms, then it can no more be called a relation, and the relation will be non-existent. If a relation is not established, the terms related by it will not also be established, because those which are related are called terms. Besides, how can relation whose nature is to be supported on terms be the support of the nature of terms? Moreover, if a relation is admitted to be of the nature of the related terms, then the question is whether by the term one of the two terms is meant or two terms? If one term alone is meant, then what should prevent the pot from being its own relation? If it is said that in the pot, the relation of the pot is not experienced, then the reply is that if one term alone is the relation, then in the case of the pot also, there will remain the relation of pot and it will be experienced also. When a thing is there, it must be experienced. But there is no such experience. Hence the relation is not of the nature of either of the related terms. If the relation is of the nature of two terms related, then the relation of knowledge with an object remains unexplained. Take for instance, the case of the knowledge of the jar. Here, if the relation of the jar and knowledge be of the nature of the two terms, namely jar and knowledge, then as knowledge would become reduced to the relation itself, knowledge cannot become related to the

jar, in as much as it is no longer a term. If relations are taken to be of the nature of terms, then it must be admitted that a thing has itself for its substratum, but this is plainly absurd. Hence relation is not of the nature of two related terms. Moreover, though another's knowledge is known as belonging to the genus of knowledge and though the pot is known as possessed of potness, still there arises the doubt namely, "Does that person know the pot or not", in other words, whether knowledge of that person refers to the pot or not? If the relation of knowledge with the pot were of the nature of two related terms i. e. knowledge and the pot, then in the present case there should not have been such doubt, because the ascertainment of both the related terms namely knowledge and pot is present. Because the relation is of the nature of two terms related, therefore when the two terms are known, the relation also will be necessarily known. But by the experience referred to above, it is determined that the two terms related, namely another person's knowledge as belonging to the genus of knowledge and the pot as sharing potness are known and yet their relation is not known; if it were known, then no doubt should have arisen. Hence relation is not of the nature of two terms related.

Advocate—In this instance though there is knowledge in the form of knowledge and pot, still the pot related to knowledge is not known; hence there can be doubt.

Critic—Now the question is: is that relation with knowledge different from the other related terms or non-different? If different, then there will be faults like unwarrantable stretch, infinite regression etc. as has been shown previously. Moreover, you cannot call it different, because according to you relation is of the nature of related terms. If non-different, then the pot being known, the

relation which is non-different from it should also be known. Because the relation is non-different from the terms, the aforesaid doubt cannot be explained. Hence, a relation is not of the nature of two terms related.

(e) Derivative relations between God and Energy inexplicable.

In the foregoing discussion we have shown that the relation between God and Energy, as understood by the school of thought we are examining here, cannot be determined in terms of Conjunction, Inherence, Identity and 'Simple relation'. These are generally recognised as the Primary Relations, and all other relations are regarded as derivative. Consequently the validity of every other possible relation has to be examined by reference to them. As these primary relations have been found inapplicable to the case of God and Energy, God cannot be logically conceived as endowed with Energy and as being the material as well as efficient cause of the universe.

(f) Consciousness and Energy cannot be explained as co-existent in or attributes of God nor Energy an attribute of consciousness and vice versa.

We have already found that there is no valid ground for proving the real existence of *Prakriti*. On the supposition of such an entity we cannot adequately account for the production and orderly arrangement of the diverse orders of effects.

To account for the production of the multiplicity of effects in the physical world they suppose the existence of Energy, and to account for the order and adjustment in it they postulate the existence of consciousness as the govern-

ing principle. Now, what is the bond of connection between consciousness and Energy ? Are they two substances co-existing in the nature of God ? Or are they two attributes inherent in His nature ? Or is Energy an attribute of consciousness ? Or is consciousness an attribute of Energy ? In this way various alternatives are possible and none of them is logically found to be satisfactory. If consciousness and Energy be conceived as two co-existent substances in the nature of God, then the nature of God should be distinguished from each of them, and His existence has to be proved on some other independent ground. If the demand for a material cause leads to the conception of Energy and the demand for an efficient cause leads to the conception of consciousness, what other valid ground is there to infer the existence of God ? Even if God's existence is taken for granted, what should be regarded as constituting His essential nature ? Is He pure Being ? But being is the universal predicate of all existent substances, eternal as well as non-eternal. To speak of God as pure Being is as good as speaking nothing of Him. In that case we cannot even say that God exists, for existence, the universal predicate of all things, will be God. Then again, can Being be the bond of connection between consciousness and Energy ? This would be meaningless, for in that case, whatever object has existence may be said to be inseparably connected with every other existent object. Thus consciousness and Energy cannot be regarded as eternally co-existent substances in the nature of God.

Nor can consciousness and Energy be consistently regarded as two attributes embracing each other in the nature of God. First of all, an attribute cannot be conceived either as the material cause or as the efficient cause of the concrete things of the world. It is only a really existent

substance that can be the cause. If Energy be the material cause of the world, it must be regarded as a real substance possessing the potentiality, the tendency and the capacity to transform itself into a variety of effects. Similarly consciousness must, in order to be the efficient cause, be conceived as a substance having the quality and power of guiding Energy and producing order and harmony in the produced world.

It may be said that it is one substance, viz. God, that as Energy becomes the material cause and as consciousness becomes the efficient cause. This would mean that when we speak of Energy we really think of God as the material cause, and that when we speak of consciousness, we think of the same substance, viz. God, as the efficient cause. Should we then say that the nature of God is composed of two elements, viz. consciousness and Energy, each of which is distinguished from, though related to the other ? Is then God to be conceived as having a composite nature ? In that case God is not to be regarded as the ultimate substance, but a derivative substance produced by the combination of two ultimate substances, viz. consciousness and Energy.

It may be said that God has a unique nature of His own, and that unique nature combines within itself the two elements, viz. consciousness and Energy. But in that case an attempt should be made to form a definite conception of that unique nature. Unless any logical conception can be formed of this nature, it would amount to taking shelter under an indefinite inconceivable hypothesis for the purpose of establishing another unprovable hypothesis. Then again, what should be the relation between that unique nature and the said consciousness and Energy ? Should it be differen from them or non-different from both or any one of them ?

If it be different from them, no bond of connection between it and them can be found out. If it be non-different from one and different from the other, the same difficulty remains. If it is to be conceived as non-different from both, it is necessary to form such a conception of it as may unify in itself the conceptions of consciousness and Energy. But no logical conception appears to be possible of an entity which is conscious as well as unconscious, changeless as well as changing, differenceless unity as well as self-differentiation into diversities, at the same time and in the same sense. Thus to have recourse to a unique nature of God is of no avail.

If it be said that God is the substratum on which consciousness and Energy inexplicably appear, then such a relationless God can neither account for the mutual relation between consciousness and Energy, nor can it be regarded as the real efficient and material cause of a real world.

It is not unoften asserted that consciousness constitutes the essential nature of God and Energy is His attribute. The fundamental difficulty which appears insoluble in regarding Energy as an attribute of God is that it cannot in that case be conceived as the material cause of this world of real effects. If the effects exist in an unmanifested and undifferentiated state in the material cause, that cause can not be an attribute, but must be a substance. If being a substance, Energy is to qualify the nature of God, the logical difficulties mentioned before in regarding it as a substance will not be overcome. Further, what is to be meant by saying that consciousness is qualified by Energy ? Are we not then to admit that consciousness qualified by Energy is the material cause of the world ? Would it not imply that this consciousness itself, being qualified by Energy, is transformed into various kinds of effects ? Would not then

the necessary conclusion be that the essential nature of God is subject to changes? This would lead to the entire abandonment of view of God and His Energy upheld by the exponents of the theory. If it is held that a part of the consciousness only is qualified by Energy, then we are to admit differentiation of parts in consciousness and the unity of consciousness would be lost. Further in that case consciousness is either to be conceived as having extension in space, so that one part being changed, the other part may remain intact, or if that is not admitted, the entire consciousness must be taken as changed with the change in any part. Thus to regard Energy as an attribute or even as a qualifying substance in relation to consciousness would lead to the dislodgement from the position that God is in Himself changeless and unaffected by the innumerable varieties of effects produced from His Energy.

Moreover, if consciousness can be regarded as endowed with Energy, there is no reason why the position cannot be altered and Energy cannot be regarded as endowed with consciousness? If instead of admitting the existence of a Supreme conscious Being, viz. God, controlling and systematising the work of Energy, Energy itself be conceived as intelligent Energy having foresight and the power of regulating its process of evolution with an end in view, the order and adjustment in the world can be equally accounted for. According to this conception, Energy may be regarded as the material as well as the efficient cause. Energy may be eternally modifying itself into various forms, but on account of the presence of the self-same consciousness in it, it may be aware that all these modifications are its own and that it pervades all the effects. But in this case also we cannot logically determine the relation of Energy with its consciousness, nor can we account for the unity and con-

tinuity of consciousness in spite of changes in Energy. All the alternatives that can be suggested fail to satisfy the reason.

Thus we find that the exponents of the theory fail to offer us such a conception of God with Energy as can be logically defectless and can prove the identity of the material and efficient cause of the world.

III.

Modification of Consciousness untenable.
Introduction

Now, let us consider if consciousness itself can be conceived as modifying itself into the world of effects. Here we are first of all to decide whether consciousness is an undivided and indivisible partless entity or it is possessed of parts, or, though originally partless, it is capable of being divided into parts or of being increased or decreased in quantity. Since consciousness is not a composite body and it has no quantitative measurement, it cannot be conceived as having parts or as capable of quantitative increase or decrease. The only possible alternative that can be accepted and is actually accepted by the exponents of this theory is that it is one and indivisible, it is without any parts and differences in itself. Now, we are to examine if such an entity can possibly have any modification.

(a) Simultaneous or successive modification inapplicable.

The partless cannot have modifications, either simultaneous or successive, because it must be of a uniform nature and cannot be subject to increase, diminution or differentiation. From a thing whose essence is that it never

departs from its own intrinsic nature, there cannot arise modifications in the form of effects which are opposed to it in all respects. Consciousness which is undivided cannot, by having abandoned its original state, be modified as effects. If it could have done this, then nothing but effects should have existed, because what is partless cannot have anything to leave behind. Because consciousness is partless, it cannot be said that one part of it becomes modified and the other part remains unmodified. Consciousness, if modified, will be wholly modified and so no part of consciousness can remain to be modified afterwards, in order that its successive modifications may be possible.

(b) Modification of the partless, self-luminous and eternal consciousness into its opposite means the loss of its innate nature.

Besides, it is observed that the things like earth having abandoned its previous state of existence attain to the form of pots etc. The lump-state of earth lapses and its pot-state arises. As long as the lump-state is there, there is no pot-state. Similarly, in case modification of consciousness be accepted, it has to be admitted that its nature which existed before creation has lapsed. If it were not the case, then consciousness is to be regarded as present in all the diverse material objects of the world. But how can the partless self-luminous consciousness be regarded as present in the nature of the unconscious world with forms? Then all distinction between the conscious and the unconscious would disappear. If the effects are the modifications of consciousness, then the effects also should be conscious. They should not appear as unconscious and limited. The modifications of consciousness cannot have the nature of the unconscious. The unconscious cannot be non-different from

or of the innate nature of consciousness. Non-luminosity cannot be intrinsic to luminosity, but modification must be intrinsical to the modified. If consciousness be conceived as modified into the unconscious, then consciousness will lose its nature as consciousness and so it will become non-eternal.

(c) Immutability of modified cause not possible.

It may be said that modification may be of two kinds. In some cases, the cause which is modified entirely disappears, and the effect into which it is modified alone remains, as in the case of the modification of milk into curd. In other cases, the cause remains untransformed in its essential nature, but still it is modified into various effects. This is found in the case of the modification of earth into pots and other earthen utensils, as well as in the case of the modification of water into waves. The modification of consciousness may be conceived as of the latter kind. The nature of consciousness remains the same under the various forms of unconscious objects into which it is modified.

Now, the distinction drawn is more illusory than real. To explain—the modification of earth into the pots etc. and the modification of water into waves are not, as modifications essentially distinct from the modification of milk into curd. Here the question is—at the time of the production of the pots or of the waves, do the prior forms of earth and water respectively remain the same, or are they wholly or partially eliminated ? If the second alternative is granted, the similarity in nature of the above-mentioned two kinds of modification is quite obvious. The change from one form into another is common to both the cases. Accordingly, in the case of the modification of conscious-

ness also we should be led to conclude that consciousness existed in one form prior to modification and it passes into a different form as a result of the modification. Thus equally real different forms of consciousness would have to be admitted. Besides, the question of partial alteration of forms can arise only in cases of causes, which have parts. In a partless cause, the alteration should logically be entire. If the first alternative is granted, then you leave your own theory and take recourse to the theory of illusory manifestation (विवर्त्तवाद्). It would then mean that there is really no modification of the cause, but the effects which are observed to be produced are mere appearances on the changeless substratum, which is therefore falsely regarded as their cause. Both these conclusions, viz. the real change of forms of the cause and the illusoriness of its causation, being unacceptable to the advocates of the view, they fail to give a logical idea of the nature of the modification advocated by them.

If consciousness does not abandon its former nature, then it should not be treated as modified. If the same nature is shared by the cause and effect, then there can be no mark that would distinguish the cause and the effect. If the mark of distinction is allowed, then in that accidental special form consciousness will become modified, hence its immutability cannot remain unbroken. Because the production of entirely non-existent effects is not admitted, these effects should be considered as of the nature of their cause. So it has to be admitted that the material cause attains to the state of those effects. Therefore the production and destruction of effects will affect the said material cause. Hence the immutability of the material cause cannot remain unaffected. The theory of modification of consciousness into the forms of the experiencer, the

experienced and the regulator implies that the imperfections of transformations etc. inhering in the unconscious and the imperfections of experience of pleasure and pain inhering in the conscious will affect the nature of consciousness.

(d) Difficulties in the conception of the modification of consciousness.

Further, the question is: Does consciousness, by being modified into the manifold objects of the world, become differentiated or remain undifferentiated ? If it is not differentiated, then every effect would be identical with every other effect, and there would be no diversity of effects as the result of the modification, and there would be no world at all. If consciousness is accepted as differentiated by the production of objects, then it will become manifold, and in that case either consciousness will acquire the nature of various things, or all things will be of the nature of consciousness. In the first case consciousness will lose its conscious nature and will be reduced to a variety of transitory and finite objects. This is a conclusion which is contradictory to the theory of the advocate. If on the other hand, the diversities of the world perfectly share the nature of eternal consciousness, then everything in the world will be eternal, self-luminous and self-modifying like consciousness. Further, if modification be accepted as pertaining to the essential nature of consciousness, then all things would simultaneously evolve out of it, and there should be no succession of causes and effects in the world. And as there is no reason why the eternal consciousness should have modification at one time and not at another, the modification must be eternal. This would imply that the entire world is eternally manifested in the nature of consciousness and hence there is really no process of modification

at all. Taking this argument with the arguments just preceding, the conclusion that follows would be that either the world eternally exists and consciousness is merged in it, or consciousness eternally remains and there is no real existence of unconscious objects subject to the limitations of time and space. According to both these conclusions, the reality of the process of modification of consciousness is disproved. The modification is established in earth etc. owing to the disappearance of one form and the appearance of another. But in a thing without successive stages, this sort of modification cannot take place. From consciousness which, it is held, has no successive stages, there cannot be the manifestation of effects which have successive stages. The manifestation of the effect is delayed by the absence of the cause or by the absence of the necessary co-operating conditions. But if the cause of the world is ever present, and if it has not to wait for any co-operating conditions for the manifestation of effects, then all effects should appear simultaneously. Consciousness being eternally present and it being the sole cause not requiring the co-operation of any other condition to produce its effects, everything ought to be produced simultaneously. Further, difference in effects is always found to be due to difference in their causes ; if this be not the case, then difference would be causeless. The production of successive effects must depend either on the presence of different causes or the manifestation of successive stages or forms in the same cause. This latter can happen only through the influence of co-operating conditions. But because consciousness is the one ultimate entity without a second and as it is of unalterable character, there is neither the possibility of a variety of causes nor of the influence of external co-operating conditions. Hence it is not possible for consciousness to be the cause of the

production of a variety of effects having succession in their manifestation and divergences in their nature.

Moreover, modification implies activity and activity must be of the nature of movement. But we find no ground in our experience to infer the possibility of movement in the Supreme Spirit which is regarded as having no body, no sense-organ, and which is believed to be all-pervading and partless. Over and above, there cannot be activity on the part of that Self, because it cannot be the support of effort. Effort is non-eternal, so it cannot be the attribute of the eternal consciousness.

(e) Fallacies of the conception of the modification of consciousness through aspects or successive states.

Advocate :—All the arguments that have been adduced to disprove the possibility of the modification of consciousness into a variety of effects are based on the assumption that the ultimate entity can have by nature only one aspect, and whatever is inconsistent with that aspect must be denied of it. But that one thing must necessarily have only one aspect is an undue assumption, for the very same thing may have different aspects at the same time. Of these aspects, one may be eternal and pervading and another non-eternal and non-pervading. The aspect known as permanent and pervading is called the aspect of generality or universality (सामान्य), because it pervades all its particular aspects and does not undergo any change with the changes in these particulars, and the latter aspects are called particulars (विशेष), because of their being differentiated from one another and of their changing character. Accordingly consciousness may be conceived as having two aspects,—one aspect being of eternal, all-pervading and self-luminous

character, and another aspect being evolved into particulars limited by the conditions of time and space.

Or the twofold nature of consciousness may be conceived in a slightly different way. It may be thought of as a substance (द्रव्य) possessed of attributes (गुण—those which are coherent सहभावी) and successive states (पर्याय). As a substance consciousness is the same in every state and has a universal nature, but in respect of successive states it is different in different states and has a particular nature. Thus, as it is possible for one entity to be of a twofold nature, there would be no inconsistency in admitting modification with regard to one aspect of consciousness, while maintaining its changeless character with regard to another.

Critic:—Here the question is : What is meant by the universal and the particular aspects of consciousness ? Are the particular aspects the same as the universal, or is the universal aspect different from the particular ? If the first alternative is adhered to, then because the universal and the particular have the same nature, it will be meaningless to speak of two aspects of consciousness. Even if to establish the possibility of identity and modification of consciousness at the same time, they are spoken of as two aspects, on account of the non-difference of the modifying aspects from the universal aspect, the change of those particular aspects would imply the change of the universal aspect as well ; that is to say, consciousness will have to be regarded as wholly changing. If the second alternative is accepted, then because the particular forms of consciousness are different from the universal consciousness, there would be so many different consciousnesses, and not one consciousness with different aspects. Again, if the universal abiding aspect and the particular changing aspect be regarded as

two aspects of the same consciousness, then consciousness as an entity is to be distinguished from its two aspects, one abiding and the other changing. If these aspects viz. the universal and the particular, are acknowledged as non-different from the one consciousness, then again there will be no discrimination of their respective natures, because there is no means of differentiating them from the ultimate substance viz. consciousness. If on the other hand the universal and the particular are taken as mutually different in nature, then it cannot be said that there is one consciousness from which both are non-different. If accepting the difference between them, consciousness be regarded as non-different from them, then because of its non-difference from these two different entities, consciousness itself will be really an aggregate of two different things, and not one consciousness with two aspects. When it is asserted that the identity of nature of the consciousness is retained inspite of the differences of attributes, it has to be ascertained whether its complete nature is to be conceived with the attributes or without the attributes. If its conception includes the idea of the attributes as well, then any change in the attributes will imply a change in its entire nature. Hence it cannot be maintained that the unity of consciousness remains unaffected, inspite of changes in the attributes. On the other hand, if the nature of consciousness is conceived apart from the attributes, then the attributes are to be regarded as separate entities somehow related to it. In that case, it is not one consciousness which remains the same and at the same time admits of changes of attributes, but what are called changing attributes being really different things, may not affect its unity, because it is not at all modified thereby. If, however, the substance-attribute-relation is to be regarded as real, it cannot be maintained that this relation exists between independent realities. The

attributes must be conceived as existing in, for and by the substance. Consequently the attributes must be regarded as non-different from the substance, viz. consciousness, because on the existence of the substance the existence of the attributes depends, but they must also be regarded as different from it so far as their special features are concerned. Now, when what is called modification consists in the changes of these special features of these attributes, we can only say that consciousness is lying unconcerned as the changeless substratum of the modifications of the attributes, but we are not justified in holding that consciousness is modifying itself into the world of effects. Not only that; as the changes in the special features consist in the destruction of the old and production of the new with no community of nature between them, the process can scarcely be called modification in the real sense of the term.

Further, if consciousness be said to be modified through the changes of its successive particular states, while retaining its substantial unity, the question is: Does consciousness become related to its changing particular states by itself remaining unmodified or by undergoing some modification? If the latter alternative be accepted, then it has to be determined whether this modification implies change of states in the substance itself or not. If no change of states is meant, there is really no modification. If change of states be admitted, then since these states constitute the substantiality of consciousness, change of states would mean the change of the nature of consciousness itself, and the assumption that consciousness remains substantially the same would be contradicted. That is to say, there would be only changing states and no changeless substance. If these changing states again should pertain to another underlying substratum, the same question would again be-

raised, and there would be *regressus ad infinitum*. If the first alternative is allowed, then what can be the relation between the changeless and differenceless consciousness and the various changing particular states, so that the changes in the latter may be interpreted as the modification of the former? There cannot possibly be any such relation. The changing states would be unconnected with the substratum, and whatever may happen to these states cannot be construed as any real modification of consciousness. An immutable and eternal thing cannot have either successive or simultaneous changes of states, and what has no characteristic difference in the subsequent state from its antecedent one cannot be said to undergo modification. Hence consciousness which is regarded as essentially eternal and immutable cannot consistently be regarded as having any changeable aspects or states, either simultaneously or successively, and consequently its real modification is inconceivable. Moreover, if consciousness is conceived as eternal and also having states, then because the states are not regarded as different from the thing having states, either there will be production and destruction of consciousness itself according as the particular states are produced and destroyed, or there will be eternity of the states as is the case with the alleged consciousness, or it may be that owing to the absence of any additional factor to connect the two, the conclusion namely the states are related to consciousness, will not be established. Thus it is shown that if there be any states in consciousness, the consciousness cannot be proved as one and eternal.

(f) Self-contradictions in the theory of Modification of consciousness.

It is really self-contradictory to maintain that the same thing is at the same time with parts and without parts,

with attributes and without attributes, with changing states and without changing states. One partless entity cannot have two-fold existence, because it is only things with parts that can possibly have one kind of characteristics in one part and a different kind of characteristics in another part. It is not proper to hold that in one partless entity, there remain the contradictory attributes of change and changelessness, eternity and non-eternity, infinity and finitude, sameness and differentiation. An absolutely unchangeable ground of continuous change is unthinkable.

(g) Appeal to the Scriptures in support of the modification of consciousness unavailing.

In answer to the charges brought against the doctrine that consciousness, while remaining essentially changeless, becomes at the same time modified into the diversified world of effects, the advocates of the view may attempt to rely on their last resort viz. the evidence of Scriptures. It is held that such a unique capacity may be inherent in the nature of the Absolute consciousness, which is the ultimate source and sustainer of the world-process, and the knowledge of this capacity is obtained from the scriptures. In support of their view, it is said that Absolute consciousness is a supersensuous Reality, and its true nature can be determined only on the authority of the scriptures. Observation and inference can be sources of knowledge only with regard to derivative existences, subject to the limitations of space and time. The Absolute Reality cannot be compared to them. From the nature of these existences as effects we can only infer that there must be one Absolute Reality as the source and support of them. As the Absolute is transcendent in character we cannot expect to observe any invariable concomitance in the finite world by which we

can determine the true nature of the Absolute consciousness. Hence we must rely on the scriptures, which alone are the infallible proofs with regard to the unique character of this Absolute Reality. Consequently the charges brought in the light of our sensuous experience against the view, that Absolute consciousness is eternally unchanging and at the same time eternally modifying itself into diversities, are beside the point. Rules of ordinary logic are not applicable in the case of the unique inscrutable character of the Transcendent Reality.

Let us consider whether the charges are really refuted by the appeal to the scriptures. With regard to the authority of the scriptures, we have previously examined at considerable length the validity of their claim to infallibility from various points of view. All the grounds for the infallibility of the scriptures as suggested by the thinkers belonging to different religious sects, have been found to be incapable of satisfying a rational mind. The source of their own authority being not established, how can they be accepted as a valid source of knowledge ? If, however, all the scriptures of all the religious sects were found to have independently arrived at the same conception with regard to the character of consciousness and to have been unanimous in their description of the nature of the ultimate cause of the universe, then their unanimous assertion might have been accepted as at best a very strong hypothesis, demanding a very respectful consideration. But it is found that they widely vary in their conception of consciousness, of the ultimate cause of the universe, of the process of creation, and various other things believed to be of a supersensuous character. The evidence of which of the scriptures should be accepted as authoritative ? In the absence of unanimity among the scriptures, we must rely

on the resources of our own understanding. And we have found in the foregoing discussion that there is no means by which we can rationally understand that there can be any entity, which is absolutely unchangeable in its nature and is at the same time modified into a world of particular effects, which is one and many, conscious and unconscious, cause and effect at the same time. In the absence of any rational means of conceiving it, how can we accept this view of consciousness ? Even if the scriptures had unanimously proclaimed such a nature of the ultimate Reality, as is inconceivable to our reason, reason could not have accepted it without changing its own essential character, i. e. without becoming unreason.

IV.

Relation between God and the World Examined. Introduction.

In the foregoing section we have examined the logical position of those who hold that God or the Absolute consciousness is the material as well as the efficient cause of the world of effects. They maintain that God, by virtue of the unique inscrutable Energy eternally present in Him, modifies Himself into this world of finite living and non-living beings. They assert that this modification does not affect His Godhood or bring about any change in His essential nature. As a result of the analysis of this doctrine we have found that whether we interpret this doctrine as the modification of the Energy alone, leaving God untouched by this process of modification, or as the modification of God Himself through the modification of His Energy, in neither case can the doctrine be logically justified. It has been found that the partless Energy, as conceived by them, cannot be consistently regarded as modifying itself into the

diversified world of effects. It has also been found that God, conceived as the eternal immutable universal consciousness, though endowed with infinite Energy, cannot be logically thought of as modifying Himself into the plurality of finite and transitory conscious and unconscious effects. Thus it has been concluded that the doctrine of God as the sole material and efficient cause of the universe is logically untenable.

We now proceed to examine whether, supposing God to be the sole cause of this diversified universe, the relation between God and the universe, as explained by the advocates of the doctrine, can be logically maintained. The exponents of this view-point generally base their conception of the relation between God and the universe on the theory that the relation between the cause and its effect is a difference-non-difference-relation. Of them some have laid the emphasis on the aspect of difference and some on the aspect of non-difference. They hold that the relation between God and the universe must be regarded as one of difference as well as non-difference, because God endowed with His mysterious Energy, is the sole cause of the universe of diverse effects, because this universe is existent in its unmanifested state in the form of His Energy and is evolved out of His Energy in the manifested state and because in every state this universe is inseparable from Him.

We have in a previous section examined the logical validity of this difference-non-difference-relation between cause and the effect in general terms, and found that the position cannot be consistently maintained. We are now going to examine this relation with special reference to God, the Absolute consciousness, and the world of diverse orders of finite effects.

(a) Non-difference between God and the world implies inconsistency and contradiction.

What is meant by the relation of difference-non-difference between God and the world? Does it mean that in some respects the world is non-different from God and in other respects the world is different from Him? If so, in what respect can God and the world be regarded as non-different from each other? Does it mean that in respect of substance they are non-different and in respect of form they are different? Let us examine how far this interpretation is consistent with their own conception. To them the world, which is the effect of God, is no less real than God, who is its cause. God is regarded by them as the one eternal absolute self-conscious Being, whose nature is never changed or polluted in any way, and the world is regarded by them as consisting of partly conscious and partly unconscious beings, which are always changing and being polluted in various ways, and which are subject to various kinds of limitations. How can two such entities be conceived as substantially the same? If the Divine substance be regarded as identical with the world-substance, then the Divine substance also would have to be admitted to be of a phenomenal nature, subject to all those changes and limitations. On the other hand, if the world-substance be regarded as identical with the Divine substance, the world would have to be viewed as really an unchangeable conscious Being, and the unconscious substances, the changes, the temporal and spatial relations would all have to be regarded as illusory. But both these positions are inconsistent with their fundamental conception of God and the world.

Then again, this interpretation implies a difference between form and substance, not only in the case of the

world of effects, but also in the case of God. Can the conception of God admit of such a difference ? In that case God would not be absolute consciousness, but a being of composite nature like any worldly object and of the nature of an effect. Thus He would not be God at all.

(b) Immanence does not establish non-difference.

It may be said that God, without being deprived of His Godhood, is immanent in the world of effects, and in this sense the world is non-different from Him. But what is the conception of this immanence ? If God, the absolute consciousness, be immanent in all the diverse effects in the same sense as earth is immanent in all earthen objects, then all these diverse effects must have a conscious nature and this conscious nature must be a matter of experience. Not only is it not experienced, but such a supposition would put an end to all distinction between conscious and unconscious beings, and even between consciousness and unconsciousness. If on the other hand the immanence of God in the world is conceived in such a way that the worldly objects do not become conscious thereby and the Divine consciousness also is not touched by the nature of the worldly objects, then the inevitable conclusion would be that there is no relation between God and the world, and the said immanence also would be meaningless. Hence the supposition of immanence also cannot establish the non-difference between God and the world.

(c) Non-difference cannot be established in respect of Existence.

If it be held that God in His nature as Existence is present in the nature of all worldly objects and in that respect the non-difference is established, then also the difficulties are not removed. On this supposition the ad-

mission of a distinction between the consciousness and the existence in the nature of God becomes inevitable. Not only a distinction, but even the possibility of separation between these aspects of the nature of God, has in that case to be admitted. While the existence of God goes with every effect, the consciousness does not Are the exponents of the doctrine prepared to accept this position ? Moreover, even if this impossible position be accepted, the question would arise, are both consciousness and existence the essential constituents of the Divine nature, or does one of them constitute His nature and the other form only an attribute? If consciousness be the substance of God and the existence an attribute, then the immanence of His existence in the world would not make the world substantially non-different from Him, and moreover in that case existence will have to be conceived as capable of being abstracted from consciousness and consciousness, which is the substance of God, as capable of being thought of as non-existent. On the contrary, if existence be supposed to constitute the substance of God, then consciousness would be reduced not only to an attribute, but a separable and therefore accidental attribute, because God the existence, while entering into the nature of effects, bids good bye to consciousness and thereby becomes unconscious.

(d) Non-difference of the world from God in respect of substance and difference in respect of forms imply the abandonment of the theory of difference-non-difference.

The diversified world of effects, having originated from the Energy of God, is regarded as non-different from Him in substance, but different from Him in respect of its diverse forms. We have found that the substantial non-difference between God and the world, in whatever way

it may be conceived, involves logical difficulties. Now, another question arises, are the diversities of forms real constituents of the nature of the world of effects or are they accidental attributes or mere illusory appearances? If they are illusory appearances, there would be no real world and no real cause-effect-relation between God and the world. This is inconsistent with the theory under consideration. If they are accidental attributes of the effect-world, we have to form an idea of a real effect-world apart from these diversities of forms. But if the world is conceived as divested of all the diversities, what would remain of this world except an abstract unity of existence? Should this abstract unity of existence be regarded as the effect of God? This would be meaningless or self-contradictory. Therefore the world, to be conceived as a real effect of God, must be regarded as essentially constituted of these diversities of forms. If these forms are regarded as different from the nature of God, as in conformity to the conception of God they must be regarded, then the world becomes essentially different from God, and the supposed difference-non-difference-relation has to be abandoned.

(e) Recognition of the relation of difference involves difficulties.

If, again, this relation of difference is adhered to and the difference-non-difference-relation is abandoned, then also various difficulties arise. In that case the theory that the world of effects is pre-existent in the unmanifested state in the nature of God and that God modifies Himself into the diversified world cannot be maintained, because all these theories are interconnected. The logical difficulties of the doctrine of the pre-existenee of effects and the modification of God we have already disc. ssed.

(f) The conception of Energy unavailing.

It is sometimes argued that it is the Energy of God in which the world of effects remains unmanifested before creation and from the modification of which it becomes progressively manifested, and it is on account of the relation of difference as well as non-difference between God and His Energy that the world of effects also is considered as different as well as non-different from Him. But while discussing the nature of Energy and its relation to God, we have found that the existence of such Energy, its relation to God, and the possibility of its modification into a world of diverse conscious and unconscious beings without affecting the eternally pure nature of God are far from being logically established. How can then the mediation of such Energy be of any substantial help in the establishment of rationally valid difference-non-difference-relation between God and the world.

(g) No unmistakable proof in favour of Difference-Non-Difference-relation.

It may further be argued that we are under the logical necessity to accept the theory of difference-non-difference. The conception of the world as absolutely different from God would lead to the conception of God as a finite Being limited by the existence of the world outside Himself and would deprive God of His nature as the sole cause of the world and the world of its nature as the effect of God. The conception of the world as absolutely non-different from Him would either reduce the nature of God into the nature of the world or the nature of the world into the nature of God, making creation illusory. Hence the remaining alternative of difference-non-difference-relation should be accepted, however difficult it may be to logically define and establish it. This argument might have some

force if the causality of God had been unmistakably proved by irrefutable logical arguments. But such proof is unavailable. Various alternative explanations to account for the existence and character of the world-process are offered by various schools of thought. Some of them accept God and others do not. Of those that accept Him as the cause, some regard His causality as real and others illusory, and others again regard Him as merely the efficient cause and not as the material cause. All these doctrines are found to involve logical fallacies, and there is no reason why the conception of God and the world, as upheld by the school of thought under review, should alone be accepted.

These thinkers assert that their doctrine should be accepted on the authority of the Scriptures. The Scriptures reveal that God is the cause of the world, and that He, though modifying Himself into the world of various orders of effects, eternally preserves His transcendent nature untouched by these modifications This is the unique inscrutable power of God. We have on previous occasions shown that the authority of the Scriptures is far from being proved. Further we find that even relying on the same Scriptures, different sects of philosophers arrive at conflicting conclusions with regard to the nature of God, the world and the relation between them. Hence we fail to discover any supra-logical authority that commands the faith of all schools of thought and that gives any definite unambiguous and doubtless knowledge of the ultimate cause of the world, the nature of the causation and the relation between that cause and the world.

(h) The doctrine of Organic Unity beset with various difficulties cannot establish Difference-non-difference-relation.

Some schools of philosophy establish the difference-non-difference-relation between God and the world in a

different way. They hold that God is the principle of the organic unity of the diversified world, and the diverse kinds of objects in the world are His organs or parts. As He is the whole of all these parts, the organism of all these organs, He and these objects must be regarded as non-different from each other, but at the same time the relation of difference between the whole and the parts,—the organism and the organs,—must also be admitted. Now the question is, what is meant by the whole of the parts or the organic unity of diversities? Is the whole or the organism to be conceived as composed of the parts or the organs? In that case God is virtually regarded as a mere name for the totality of all the effects, and there would be no God above, before or other than the world of effects. This view would practically be as good as atheism, of which the exponents of the view are so much afraid. Then again, according to this view, the world of effects would have no cause prior to and other than itself, and hence the demand for the causal explanation of the world would remain unsatisfied.

It may be said that this view does not mean that God is the mechanical aggregate of so many different kinds of effects constituting the world, but means that all these effects exist, before creation, in an unmanifested state in the nature of God and God also exists in that state as the unmanifested Being. At this state the effects remain undivided and indistinguishable from one another and consequently from the whole organic conscious Being, viz. God, in whose nature they remain unified. When in creation the effects are gradually manifested from the nature of God, it is really the self-diversification of God, i. e. the self-manifestation of God in the forms of diverse effects. At this stage also God does not become anything other than God and

does not lose His self-conscious existence, but the undifferentiated unity of God becomes a differentiated unity, and each of the differences manifested in His nature remains part and parcel of His nature. He now exhibits Himself as a concrete all-inclusive Being,—the all which had been unmanifested in His nature being now manifested. Thus God is conceived as including all the diversities as parts of Himself; His self-consciousness includes the consciousness of these diversities; the unity of His self unifies all these diversities and brings about uniformity and harmony among all of them; His self-mastery includes the regulation of all these diversities. Accordingly God cannot be said to be composed of these effects and the law of causation also is not violated. But God in His unity is the cause, and when He manifests Himself as the diversities of the world, these diversities are non-different from Him in as much as they are not something other than and external to Him, but the diverse manifestations of His own nature.

Now, even if this interpretation be accepted, the question would arise what is the relation between God as perfect unity and God as diversified? Are they the same or different? If they are different, there would be two Gods and each would be limited by the other. Otherwise, if the differenceless God is conceived as transformed into the differentiated God, then at the time of creation, only the differentiated God is to be regarded as existing and the differenceless God is to be regarded as no more. On the other hand, if they are conceived as the same, then God must be admitted to be of a changing nature,—His nature changing from one state to another. If this conclusion is to be avoided, all the states except one must be regarded as false and illusory; either the differenceless state is to be regarded as a mere abstrac-

tion without any real independent existence, or the differentiated state is to be regarded as apparent without any reality, i. e. the world of effects has to be abandoned as unreal. It is evident that all these alternatives are inconsistent with the accepted doctrine of the advocates of this theory.

Further, even if these difficulties are ignored and God is conceived as the organic unity of all the diversities of the world, then also it is unavoidable to think of God as having two aspects, viz. that which unifies the diversities and the diversities which are unified by it. God is here conceived as having a twofold nature. He is one and many, the unity and the plurality, the unifier and the unified. Are these two aspects different or non-different from each other? If they are different, God must be regarded as a composite Being, composed of two different entities. and like all composite bodies He must be conceived as non-eternal, liable to production and destruction. Moreover, no logical explanation is found as to how these two different entities, viz. unity and diversity, are related to each other in the nature of God, so that the principle of unity may unify the diversities, and the principle of diversities may diversify the unity. If any third principle be supposed to bring about their relation, a similar question about the relation of difference or non-difference between that principle and these principles would arise, leading to *regressus ad infinitum*. If on the other hand it is said that the unity and the diversity are non-different from each other, then either the unity or the diversity will have to be regarded as unreal, for a real unity and a real diversity cannot be spoken of as identical with each other without gross violence to thought and language. It may be said that though they are different, they are not really distinct entities, but only

different aspects of the same nature of God. But this interpretation also does not avoid the logical difficulty. In that case, we are face to face with three notions, viz. the unity, the diversity and the nature of which they are the two different aspects. This nature, then, must have a distinct character, which is neither that of unity nor that of difference, but which can relate together these two It is beyond the capacity of intelligence to form an idea which is neither that of unity nor that of difference. Even if this were possible, then also the relation of this distinct nature with unity on the one hand and diversity on the other would have been inexplicable. If however this nature be regarded as identical either with the unity or with the diversity, then the difficulty remains as it was.

Again, if God's nature be somehow conceived as consisting in the unity of the diversities of the world. then there is room for two other objections, which it is difficult to meet As the diversities form organic parts of the nature of God, the defects and impurities of all these finite parts must be regarded as pertaining to the nature of God. God, in that case, cannot be regarded as the ideal of purity and perfection, free from the touch of any impurity, limitation and deficiency, as He is conceived to be. The agonies and vices, the physical and moral evils, the bondages and struggles for emancipation, to which the finite creatures are subject, must then be thought of as inseparable part and parcel of the nature of God. God is to be regarded as either incapable of freeing His nature from all these defects or unwilling to do so. In the first case His omnipotence will have to be denied, and in the second case His goodness will be questionable. If it be said that God as the all-inclusive whole does not suffer from the sufferings of His particular parts, and that the vices and imperfections of the

particular parts do not make His entire nature vicious and imperfect, then also He cannot be acquitted of the responsibility for these sufferings, vices and imperfections of His parts, and the charge against His goodness would remain unrefuted. Further, it cannot be consistently conceived that while the parts or organs of a Being are impure and vicious, the entire Being is pure and perfect. It would be like saying that a man has got an ideal moral character, while his actions are sinful and criminal. Moreover, if it is His will or nature that the particular individuals, that form parts of His nature, should be vicious and imperfect and miserable, while His total Being is good and perfect and blissful, then the particular creatures cannot be held responsible for their lots, their attempts to get rid of them must be doomed to failure, and their morality and religion must be meaningless.

We now pass to the other objection to this conception. The world of diversities, originating from and forming parts of the nature of God, is changing and is in the process of creation. Though it consists of bewilderingly numerous diversities, there is at every stage of its evolution the potentiality of other innumerable effects, which have not been manifested. This implies that all the potentialities of the nature of God are not realised, and as a matter of fact can not be fully realised in any period of time The obvious conclusion from this would be that the Divine nature is never fully realised, but is a state of progressive realisation. Such a nature cannot be regarded as perfect. The very meaning of imperfection of a being is that it is not what it ought to be, that the potentialities of its nature are not realised, that the mission of its life is not fulfilled. If that be the case of the nature of God, how can God be regarded as perfect ? God is then to be conceived

as always in a state of struggle for self-development and self-fulfilment. Such a God is not evidently the highest object of worship to religious men. If on the other hand God be conceived, as He is actually conceived, as the highest ideal of perfection in every respect, then according to the above-mentioned theory God would be regarded as in the process of making, and not the eternally self-fulfilled God of religion. Thus we find that the conception of God as the organic unity of all the diversities of the world is beset with various difficulties, and it cannot therefore logically establish the difference-non-difference-relation between God and the world.

(i) The relation of substantive and attribute between God and the world untenable.

Another interpretation may be given of the relation between God and the world. The world consists of two kinds of objects, viz. conscious and unconscious. These conscious and unconscious beings may be conceived as the attributes of God. God in His essential character is the one infinite self-conscious omniscient and omnipotent Being with all the excellent qualities eternally present in Him. The conscious and the unconscious beings constituting the world are regarded as attributes which though different from His essential nature, eternally belong to and qualify His nature. Thus He is eternally the qualified God. These qualifying attributes, viz. the conscious and the unconscious beings, remain unified with His essential nature in the unmanifested state, but become manifested in a variety of forms or modes at the time of creation. But in both the states they are inseparable from His nature. Though as attributes they are really different from Him, they being not separate entities or substances do not contradict the

doctrine of the non-dualism of God and can in this sense of inseparableness be regarded as non-different from Him.

Now, according to this interpretation, two kinds of attributes are ascribed to God. One kind of attributes pertains to His essential nature, and it is in respect of these super-excellent attributes the perfection of His character is sought to be preserved. But the other kind of attributes, consisting of the conscious and unconscious beings, which manifest themselves in the diversities of the world, is regarded as qualifying His nature, but not forming the essence of His nature. But if these attributes are eternally and inseparably associated with the nature of God, it is difficult to conceive how they can be regarded as non-essential to His nature and incapable of affecting it by their imperfections and impurities and how only the other kind of attributes which are regarded as good qualities can be regarded as constituting His essential nature. If those attributes also are admitted, as they ought logically to be admitted, as forming parts of His nature, then all the charges that have been brought against this conception in the previous paragraphs, will remain unanswered.

If it be said that attributes pertaining to a substance are to be regarded as different from the nature of the substance, then the good qualities in terms of which God is glorified must also be regarded as different from His essential nature, because they also are attributes. In that case the substance of God would have to be conceived as the attributeless pure Being. This would be inconsistent with the conception of God, as cherished by the exponents of this doctrine. According to this doctrine an attributeless substance is inconceivable, because a substance is always conceived in terms of its attributes. If this be so, the changes of the attributes must be construed as changes of

the substance. the impurities and imperfections, if any, of the attributes must be regarded as impurities and imperfections of the substance itself. Accordingly by interpreting the diversities of the world as the attributes of God, His nature cannot be conceived as untouched by the changes, impurities and imperfections of the world. Finally, how the objective realities of the world, the really existent conscious selves and unconscious material bodies, can be regarded as attributes or products of attributes, would pass the comprehension of men of commonsense. If the term attribute has been used by the advocates of the view only in a technical sense to indicate the nature of these conscious and unconscious beings as dependent, derivative and conditioned realities, then many of the difficulties mentioned in connection with the previous alternative interpretations will be unavoidable. Further, if these realities be parts of His being, His being would be of a composite nature and hence of the nature of an effect. If they are different from Him, then His existence will be limited by their existence. Further, on account of their being eternally associated with Him, not only will their nature be regarded as conditioned by His nature, but His nature also will have to be regarded as conditioned by their nature. He would then have to be conceived as a conditioned Being, and not an Absolute Being. In this way, various difficulties would stand in the way of conceiving Him as an infinite, absolute and perfect Being and at the same time as being qualified by the existence of the world of conscious and unconscious beings inseparable from Him.

(j) The self-body-relation between God and world criticised.

Last of all, let us examine another interpretation of this doctrine. The relation between God and the world

may be conceived on the analogy of the relation between the soul and the body. God is the universal Self, the self of the universe and all that exists in it ; and the universe is His body. The universe consists of various orders of beings, conscious and unconscious. God is the Self of all. It is on account of the presence of this universal Self, pervading all these finite relative changing existences that inspite of their apparently bewildering diversities they are related together and organically united with one another. In the unmanifested state they are non-different or non-distinguishable from this Self, but in the manifested state they are different from, though inseparably related to, Him. They are evolved out of the nature or power of the Self, their modifications and transformations, their actions and destinies, are all governed and regulated by Him, they serve through all their changes and actions and reactions the purpose or ideal which is inherent in the nature of the Self, and at the end they are merged in Him. Thus they grow, exist, act and die from, in and for this universal Self, viz. God. Hence they are said to constitute His body. Accordingly this world of diversities may aptly be regarded as different as well as non-different from Him.

Now, the question is, what is the essential nature of this universal Self ? Is this Self to be conceived as pure absolute differenceless, changeless consciousness, or as an omnipotent and omniscient, self-conscious and self-determining formless Being, or as an embodied conscious Being with infinite power and knowledge and with the world of diversities as eternally constituting His body. If the first conception is accepted, then, as we have found in course of our previous discussion, there will be no means to bridge over the gulf between the differenceless changeless consciousness and the changing diversities of the world. The position

will be that God and the world—the Self and the body—are essentially different from each other, and the relation between them is mysterious and inexplicable. The non-dualism of God cannot then be maintained, because the world has an existence different from that of God. The cause-effect-relation between God and the world also will not be established, because the changeless differenceless consciousness cannot be consistently conceived as modified into the changing diversities of the world without losing its character as consciousness. The Self-body-relation between them also will be a mere name for the indefinable and unaccountable contact between two entities of absolutely different characters,—one being timeless, spaceless, differenceless, changeless consciousness, and the other being a process in time, extending in space, having innumerable differences and transformations.

If the second alternative be accepted, then a Being essentially formless has to be conceived as having a body. Is this body created by Him or does it eternally pertain to His nature? If the world, which is regarded as His body, is conceived as having been created by Him, then the world-process must be thought of as having a beginning in time. If the formless Self had been without a body prior to the creation of the world and then at a particular period of His life exercised His unlimited knowledge and power for creating a body for Himself, it must be admitted that some change took place in His nature and outlook for passing from one condition of existence to a different condition and that there must have been some sufficient reason or cause for this change, either in the shape of some uneasiness within His consciousness, or in the shape of some impelling or compelling force from outside. All these conclusions, which necessarily follow from the supposition

of the creation of the world-body by God, are of course inconsistent with the fundamental conception of God.

If on the other hand the world-body eternally pertains to Him,—though it may exist sometimes in a subtle or potential state and sometimes in a gross and kinetic state,—it cannot be maintained that God or the Self of the world is essentially formless. It is inconceivable that He is eternally bodiless and eternally embodied. If the world-body is conceived as eternally present, in whatever form it may be, then either it should be regarded as forming an essential part of God's nature, or it should be regarded as a different entity eternally in contact with His nature. The difficulties of the latter supposition have already been pointed out. If the former supposition is accepted, then God is to be conceived as essentially an embodied conscious Being. In that case the very conception of God would involve the conception of the world,—the conception of the Self would include the conception of the body. The acceptance of this conception would of course mean that all the characteristics of the body, all the transformations, imperfections and impurities of the body, must affect the nature of the Self. The position of the self would then be reduced merely to the position of the principle of unity of a living organism. The difficulties that arise from such a conception of God and the world have been already discussed.

Summary.

Now we give a summary of our discussion about the above theory of God and also state shortly the general trend of our refutation of the theory.

In order to demonstrate that God is both the material and efficient cause of the universe, the exponents of this theory first lay down the following principles. The effect is existent before its production in the material cause in an unmanifested state, and it becomes manifested as the result of the modification of that cause. Having established this theory of the pre-existence of the effect in the cause and the production or manifestation of the effect by the modification of the cause, they proceed to show that the ultimate cause in which the world of effects remains unmanifested must be regarded as undifferentiated Energy or power. Having shown that the Energy is not many but one, they attempt to prove that what is looked upon as Energy from the viewpoint of the effects is not an independent entity but dependent for its existence and manifestation on the cosmic consciousness, to which it eternally belongs. So it is called the Energy of that consciousness. Then, it is proved that this consciousness eternally endowed with Energy is the non-dual absolute Reality, because its Energy being essentially existent in, for and by this consciousness does not contradict or limit its non-duality. Hence it is shown that this non-dual consciousness is the real ultimate cause of the universe, and the modification of its Energy is therefore construed as the modification of this consciousness. This consciousness endowed with the Energy is conceived as God. Because the diversities of the universe are nothing but manifestations of the Divine Energy which is non-different from the one cosmic consciousness or God and because the relation of the cause and the effect is regarded as difference as well as non-

difference, the conclusion is reached that this world-process is the self-modification of the one non-dual cosmic consciousness or God endowed with this cosmic Energy. Thus God is shown to be the material and efficient cause of the universe. They however take care to show that this self-modification of God does not imply any change or transformation of the essential nature of God. The unchanging character of God is reconciled with His self-modification into diversities on the infallible authority of the Scriptures

In our examination of the theory, we have shown that all these conclusions are infected with contradictions. By the refutation of scriptural authority, all the theories based on the belief upon the scriptures have been turned into questionable hypotheses, dependent for their validity upon logical proof. So the theory of cosmic consciousness, eternally unchanging and at the same time eternally modifying itself, taken as valid on scriptural authority, is *ipso facto* refuted. Then the theories of the pre-existence of effects, of the modification of the cosmic Energy, of the possession of Energy by the cosmic consciousness, of non-difference of Energy and its substratum, of the modification of consciousness, of the realisation of one in the shape of many, of difference as well as non-difference between the cause and the effect and between the world of effects and the cosmic consciousness have all been logically examined and found to be beset with various kinds of unanswerable logical difficulties. Thus we are led to the conclusion that the theory that God is the material and efficient cause of the universe is logically unjustifiable.

APPENDIX E

Occidental Theories about the Absolute.

Here let us give a short account of the different conceptions about the nature of the Absolute found in western philosophy. All the problems of philosophy may be arranged under the three heads: (1) What is the nature of the subject? (2) What is the nature of the object? (3) What is the nature of the Unity which comprehends both subject and object? Here the problem is to determine the unity which holds subject and object in their relation. There are three ways to accomplish this result viz., I. to start either from the subject or II. from the object or III. from the unity of both; that is, to start from the subject and show that object-world falls within the range of the subject's activity, to start from the object and show that subject's life is resolved into the forms and processes of the object-world and finally to lay primary stress neither on the subject nor on the object, but on their unity as such.

I.

In the first group we find three theories :—

(1) The first view holds that since knowing is a subjective process in the mind of an individual, what is known must always be either the self or some modification of the self. Hence nothing but the self exists. This is called Solipsism (Latin *solus*, alone and *ipse*, self). If the attitude of Solipsism is defined rigorously, it would be difficult to name historic representatives of the theory. (For Criticism see "Solipsism" in the *Monist*, July 1931). (2) The second view does not resolve the object into the being of the subject (as the Solipsism does), but regards the objectivity of the object (external world) as a *fact* and resolves its characteristic nature into ideal elements in the subject's life. The historical representative of this form of Subjective Idealism

is Berkeley. (For Criticism see Moore's "Refutation of Idealism" in "Philosophical Studies"; Prichard's "Kant's Theory of Knowledge" and Pitkin's "New Realism"). (3) The third view regards objectivity (all forms of objectivity) as a *result*, and "deduces" it from an ultimate act of spontaneity on the part of the subject. The historical representative of this thorough-going Subjective Idealism is Fichte. (For Criticism see E. L. Schaub's article in the *Philosophical Review* (of New York), January 1913).

II.

Some have regarded physical matter and physical energy as fundamental elements. They take them as ultimate and primary and recognise subject as their derivative. This view takes the form of what is called variously Materialism, Naturalism, or Physical Realism. (For Criticism see Ward's "Naturalism and Agnosticism" and Stout's "Mind and Matter".)

III.

The view which starts from unity has taken different forms.

(a) The unity is indeterminate, it is the indifferent neutrum in which both subject and object merely subsist. This is in the main the position of Schelling. (For Criticism see Preface to Hegel's "Phenomenology of Mind" Vol. I.—Translated by J. B. Baille).

(b) Some have started from the conception of substance. By Substance is meant that "which is in itself and which is conceived through itself." Substance is not the creator of the world, not even the fundamental cause of all things, but the logical presupposition (reason) of all that exists. This unity is not an indifferent neutrum, but a concrete whole, of which subject and object are distinct modes or levels of realisation. The first representative of this theory is Spinoza. Thought and extension—or in more recent terminology, nature and mind--are denied by Spinoza

to have any separate and independent existence. There cannot be, as he argues, more than one self-complete and self-dependent Being, and this Being alone can properly be said to have substantial or independent existence.

(c) Hegel develops his position by a criticism of these views. He found that the first principle of self-consciousness is not that of identity, as Fichte had held, but of Being; it is self-conscious Being that constitutes the first principle through which the reality revealed in our experience can be known. If, however, we take the mere notion of Being we shall never arrive at an experience in which self-consciousness lives; self-consciousness only exists in concrete Being (unity and diversity together). So Hegel discarded the view of Schelling, the view that the Absolute is an empty infinite, a simple identity, devoid of characteristics of mind and nature. To think a pure simple or a pure unity is to think a pure nothing.* Though Hegel, like Spinoza, recognises unity,

* "What is being without nothing? What is pure, indeterminate, unqualified, indistinguishable, ineffable being, i. e. being in general, not this or that particular being? How can it be distinguished from nothing? And, on the other hand, what is nothing without being, i. e. nothing conceived in itself, without determination or qualification, nothing in general, not the nothing of this or that particular thing? In what way is this distinguished from being? To take one of the terms by itself comes to the same thing as to take the other by itself, for the one has meaning only in and through the other. Thus to take the true without the false, or the good without the evil, is to make of the true something not thought (because thought is struggle against the false), and therefore something that is not true. And similarly it is to make of the good something not willed (because to will the good is to negate the evil), and therefore something that is not good Outside the synthesis, the two terms taken abstractly pass into one another and change sides. Truth is found only in the third; that is to say, in the case of the first triad, (the triad which comprehends in itself all the others, and which, as is well known, is constituted by the terms *being, nothing,* and *becoming*) in *becoming*, which, therefore, is, as Hegel says, "the first concrete concept".

(B. Croce's Philosophy of Hegel.)

yet he is not satisfied by only showing that differences presuppose a unity; he tried to determine the temporal processes through which the unity breaks up necessarily into definite, knowable and related aspects. Hegel employs in this voyage of discovery a method which he names the "dialectic".*

(d) Now let us turn to Green. By the analysis of the implications of the knowledge of Nature Green came to the conclusion that there is a single all-embracing eternal consciousness. The single all-inclusive system of thought-relations which constitute Nature, "implies something other than itself, as a condition of its being what it is." It presupposes the activity of a thinking being, a "self-distinguishing, self-objectifying, unifying, combining consciousness" whose synthetic activity is the source of the relations by which the knowable world is unified. "The real world is essentially a spiritual world, which forms one inter-related whole because related throughout to a single subject." Though Green's conclusion is similar to Hegel, his method of argument by which he reaches that conclusion is not that of Hegel's dialectic to which he is averse.

* "Impugning as naive or as sterile methods hitherto pursued—namely, the intuitive, the empirical, the analytical, the mathematical—he promises to vindicate a new way of knowing that will transcend the traditional bifurcation of truth and error. The new way of knowing—he calls it dialectical—will reveal conflicting ideas or thoughts not as disjunctions but as conjoined. A view of truth will emerge in radical opposition to the prevailing one Truth will appear as synoptic and dynamic, each of its phases being at once false and necessary, false in isolation but necessary as determining its progress of evolution. Of such a conception of truth, involving its own opposite as an inseparable aspect of itself, the Phenomenology is to offer an exposition and defence, a conception comparable to that of biological organism whose growth and continuity depend upon different stages, the later supplanting yet completing the earlier."

(J. Loewenberg's "The Exoteric Approach to Hegel's Phenomenology"—*Mind*, October, 1934.)

(e) Now about Bradley. Bradley's conception of the "real" is that it is that which is not in relation. The real cannot contradict itself; non-contradiction is the test of reality ; and relation always does involve contradiction : every case of terms and relation is self-contradictory. The category of relation involves a *regressus ad infinitum* which cannot be thought of as belonging to Reality.*

According to Bradley's analysis, our discursive thought points to a unity which it cannot realise. "The way of taking the world which I have found most tenable is to regard it as a single Experience, superior to relations and containing in the fullest sense everything which is." (F. H. Bradley—On appearance, error and contradiction—Mind, April, 1910). "Nothing to myself is real ultimately but that supra-relational unity of the One and Many, which is at once the consummation and the pre-condition of all and everything." (Collected Essays by Bradley, Vol. II). Nothing can be real but the whole : It is the whole, if we think of the whole as including the parts otherwise than by

* The relation hardly can be the mere adjective of one or both of its terms; or, at least, as such it seems indefensible. (The relation is not the adjective of one term, for, if so, it does not relate. Nor for the same reason it is the adjective of each term taken apart, for then again there is no relation between them. Nor is the relation their common property, for then what keeps them apart ? They are now not two terms at all, because not separate. And within this new whole the problem of inherence would break out in an aggravated form) And, being something itself, if it does not itself bear a relation to the terms, in what intelligible way will it succeed in being anything to them ? But here again we are hurried off into the eddy of a hopeless process, since we are forced to go on finding new relations without end. The links are united by a link, and this bond of union is a link which also has two ends; and these require each a fresh link to connect them with the old. The problem is to find how the relation can stand to its qualities and this problem is insoluble.

(Taken from Ch. III of Bradley's "Appearance and Reality")

way of relation, as a whole which swallows up the parts so completely that all relation disappears, and they cease to be even parts.*

* If to be out of relation is the essence of Reality, it is clear that the individual self cannot be real. The analogy of self will not do, because it implies the contrast between self and not-self; and there we have relativity at once, "the only illusory play of relations and qualities". Universal self or God of theistic Religion is also not Reality. He must be conceived of as related to the objects (outside divine Mind) of His own knowledge. These relations necessarily form part of the nature of the Divine Mind itself. Once again we have relation and so not Reality

Bradley's view is different from other absolutists According to Spinoza, Absolute is Substance which is neither mind nor matter and of which both consciousness and extension are but attributes, whereas Bradley accepts Absolute as sentient experience. Hegel's Absolute will not satisfy Bradley's demand for unrelatedness For though we have got rid of external relations, we have not got rid of internal relations, we are still conceiving of our reality as made up of inter-related parts or elements: and to be involved in relation is, according to Bradley's definition, to be unreal. According to Green. the Absolute is relational and self-conscious, but both relation and self-consciousness are denied of the Absolute by Bradley. In his statement of the idealistic argument Bradley's departure from Green is quite marked. Spencer's position was simply "We do not, and cannot know" the Absolute. Bradley's view is "No being can know the Absolute, not even Himself or itself." Spencer's position is "we cannot get at absolute Truth". Bradley's is "there is no such thing as absolute truth, all truth is and must be partially false" If we knew the Absolute, what we knew could not be real just because it is the object of knowledge. To know the Absolute at once implies that distinction between knower and known which cannot belong to the real Reality can never be known: directly it becomes known, it is no longer Reality.

CRITICISM.

Spinoza.

"Spinoza thought that the conception of substance implied the conception of an absolute substance that is "self-caused" in that its "essence involves existence"; and "infinite", in that it contains all attributes in its definition, and implies all things and events as its modes. But precisely......there is no absolute maximum definable in terms of deductive necessity. The actual deductive systems of human knowledge are those in which, as in the case of Euclidean geometry or the Newtonian mechanics, the axioms, postulates, indefinables, etc.—that is, the terms and propositions that are *not* deduced—are few and fruitful. The investigator doubtless makes them as few and as fruitful as possible. But there is no deductive principle that determines *how* few or *how* fruitful they shall be. The deductive method which is the basis of Spinoza's system, clearly requires *some* elements that are not deduced. These elements stand in certain simple relations, such as difference, to one another; but they are not brought under the determination of the principles of the system itself. Now this being the case, it is clearly absurd to infer an absolute system in which every element shall be deduced—a system in which, through excess of deductive cogency, the very conditions of deduction shall be removed!

Or, if this be untrue to Spinoza's real intent, it is still gratuitous even to infer that there shall be but *one* deductive system. There is, let us grant, a universal totality;* but is there any reason why it should possess any definite degree of deductive unity? Is there any reason why that totality

*' On the ground that all the components of the universe must be somehow 'related'. That relation does not imply dependence and unity, is the contention of 'pluralism'."

should not be composed of many systems which are related to one another, as are the non-deductive elements within these several systems? Now if it be contended that this is equivalent to the assertion of a single all-embracing system, of which the particular systems, such as geometry, mechanics, ethics, etc., shall be the axioms, then we have only to remind ourselves of the entire insignificance of such a contention. There is no ground for determining whether these several systems, together with such systems as exceed present knowledge, form a highly coherent or a loosely collective system. It is entirely possible that together they imply nothing other than that which they imply severally, except the collective totality of all that they imply. In other words, we are justified in saying no more than that if we knew *all* the first principles, we could deduce all objects and events. No self-respecting philosopher would go to the trouble of proving this, and it is certain that Spinoza did not mean to assert so trivial and obvious a proposition. But the dilemma is unavoidable. Either he is limited to that conclusion, or he must be charged with attempting to override his own logic—with seeking to find an argument for an absolute deductive system by condemning the deductive method itself."*

(Perry's Critical Survey of Idealism.)

* "The principal defect of Spinoza's system lies naturally in his idea of substance and the way in which it is educed; so that in the first preliminary conception existence is tacitly imputed to the subject, and then analytically deduced from it This leap from the mere idea, or what is thought, into the actual world is the most violent and break-neck *salto mortale* to be met with in any system of philosophy . ...It has been noticed already how persistently Spinoza confounds and identifies *cause* with *reason* in the obvious intention of arguing from ideas to realities.. Spinoza .....creates at once a *cause*, by describing God, or what comes to the same thing, substance, as *causa sui* which is as great a contradiction or non-sense, as if it were said that someone was his own father ...Spinoza's attempt to

The Hegelian Dialectic

by

BERNARD MUSCIO

The argument of the Hegelian Dialectic may be stated in general terms as follows. If we attribute a predicate to some subject, we are compelled, as a result of a careful scrutiny into what we have done, to attribute to the same subject the logical contrary of that predicate. We are thus compelled to assert a contradiction. For, while two contrary propositions may both be false, they cannot both be true. The fact is, however, according to the dialectic, that there inevitably arise instances in which we are forced to believe both of two contrary propositions true. It is held that the most extreme scepticism cannot escape this result. Every sceptic can be forced to admit, by an argument similar to that of Descartes, that *something* exists. In admitting so much the contradiction is at once reached, for a predicate has been attributed to some subject. Because "Being" has been predicated, "Not-Being" must be predicated. The solution of this contradiction, according to the dialectic, is a synthesis in which the distinction between the contrary predicates, or "categories", is overcome. Each is seen to be a "moment" in a "higher" predicate. The predication of the synthesis, however, resuscitates the difficulty, since we are forced to predicate *its* contrary. A new syn-

make it clear to himself and others how these two attributes, extension and thought, in complete causal independence of each other, can yet be so joined together in the same being as to be regarded as qualities of it—this attempt must be held to have failed altogether".

(L. Noire's "A Sketch of the Development of Occidental Philosophy"—Vol. I of Max Muller's Translation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.)

thesis is thus required. The disease breaking out once more, the process is continued until a predicate, "the Absolute Idea", is reached, which, when attributed to Reality, does not compel us to predicate its contrary. From the fact that "the Absolute Idea" can be predicated of Reality, it can be inferred, it is held, that the Universe is Spiritual. This conclusion concerning the universe is, therefore, according to the dialectic, absolutely certain. Our certainty of its truth arises from the fact that we are compelled to predicate "the Absolute Idea" of Reality, if we predicate of it anything at all; and, no matter how great our scepticism, we must predicate "Being".

...Finding that both are predicated of the one subject we recognise a contradiction, and, according to the dialectic, one solution only is possible, namely, the merging of the differences of P and Q in the synthesis R.

We submit, briefly, that if P and Q are identical, we predicate Q in predicating P, but that, if P and Q are identical, they are *not* logical contraries, and the joint predication of both of them of one subject presents nothing to synthesise. On the other hand, if P and Q *are* logical contraries, there is not the slightest ground for the predication of the one in the fact that we have predicated the other. And here, also, there is nothing to synthesise.

There appears to be an extraordinary confusion in the dialectic between predicates and the ideas of predicates. The dialectic seems to say that the *ideas* of logically contrary predicates are identical,—which is itself an amazing statement,—and that we are therefore compelled to predicate logically contrary predicates of the one subject.

Consider the terms "Being" and "Not-Being". The advocates of the dialectic have repeatedly said that the *ideas* of "Being" and of "Not-Being" are identical. The idea

of "Being" is the idea of "Pure Being", not the idea of "Being-Determinate" but of "Being-apart-from-all-determinateness". This, it is said, is what we *mean* by "Not-Being". It is *definitely asserted* that, if we examine what we *mean* by "Being" and "Not-Being", we are unable to *discriminate* between our *meanings*.

So far, however, we are in the realm of *ideas* only. And what have ideas to do with the point at issue? We certainly do not predicate the *idea* of "Being" of anything whatever, nor do we predicate the *idea* of "Not-Being" of anything whatever. Even supposing the contrary, no contradiction would be generated, since it is asserted that the *ideas* are *identical*. If it be admitted that we do not predicate ideas, what explanation of the procedure can be adduced? The logically contrary predicates, it may be said, are, of course, *not* ideas, but we predicate logical contraries because our ideas of them are identical. This, however, is clearly false. If the idea in the mind of a person when he uses "Being" as a symbol is *not discriminable* from that in his mind when he uses "Not-Being" as a symbol, it is simply contradictory to say that the person *means* one predicate by "Being" and its logical contrary by "Not-Being". He means the same thing by the two words.

We have supposed,—what is absurd,—that ideas may be used as predicates. It would generally be admitted that this supposition is absurd. Nevertheless, it is this absurdity which seems to have been committed by the dialectic. Because of an identity between ideas of logically contrary predicates, in "affirming Being", it is said, we are "affirming Not-Being". It is added that the ideas manifest an "identity in difference". This means that they are "identical" in one part, and "different" in another, that one is X*y* and the other X*z*. The difference must be temporarily suppressed when it is said that in "affirming" the one, we are, *ipso facto*, "affirming" the other. By virtue of indiscernibility of

"difference", and by virtue of this alone, Xz is "affirmed', when Xy is "affirmed". The suppressed "difference" is then brought forward, and there is considerable astonishment over the fact that ideas, which could *not* be *discriminated* from each other, are really logical contraries. The simple solution is that meanings have been altered to suit the stage of the process.

To "affirm Being" is to predicate existence of "something." If there is in reality a predicate corresponding to our *idea* of "Being", when we use that *idea* in "affirming Being" we are making a true judgment. If we use an idea different from the idea of "Being", it matters not how slight the difference and how great the similarity, we do *not* know that, because there is something in reality corresponding to the idea of "Being", there is *also* something in reality corresponding to this other idea. It is a fallacy, therefore, to "affirm" the one on the ground that we have "affirmed" the other. If we make two judgments, of which each attributes the same predicate to the same subject, we make no advance in thought in making the second of the two; but if, as is necessary for the occurrence of the contradictions on which the dialectic relies, our two judgments attribute each a different predicate to the same subject, we are not justified in making the one judgment when we have made the other, on the ground of a *point* of identity between, either the predicates, or the ideas of the predicates.

The dialectic requires that the relation of "implication" should hold between logically contrary predicates. We would thus be able to infer "S is Q" from "S is P," where Q and P are logically contrary predicates. Curiously enough, no contradiction now results. If logically contrary predicates "implied" each other in the above way, there would be instances of two contrary propositions *both being true*. It is generally assumed that two contrary propositions cannot *both* be true, and the dialectic accepts this assumption.

On the above theory, however, two contrary propositions would both be true, and there would be an end of the matter. The difficulty which the principle of the dialectic is directed to remove is that we are compelled to *believe* true both of two logically contrary propositions. Yet, if we ask why we are compelled to such a belief, we are referred to "implication" between logically contrary predicates; but this, clearly, is a false theory, and, even if true, would not generate the contradictions. The fact seems to be that the reason for asserting our compulsion to this belief is to be found in the asserted "indiscernibility of meanings" of logically contrary predicates; the relation between *meanings* being transferred to predicates without the confusion being realised.

Put otherwise: the relation of "implication", as used by the dialectic, must hold *either* between predicates, or between entities other than predicates. If it holds between predicates, no contradiction is generated, since then two contrary propositions can *both be true*. Consequently, "implication" must hold between entities other than predicates. We discover that these entities are the *ideas* of the predicates, and that the relation between them is that of identity, or partial identity. If it is identity, the predicates of which they are ideas *cannot* be logical contraries. If it is partial identity, we cannot legitimately attribute to a subject the predicate corresponding to the one, because we have attributed to it the predicate corresponding to the other. Here, also, no contradiction is generated.

We conclude, therefore, that so far as the argument we have considered,—which is the fundamental argument adduced in support of the dialectical principle,—is concerned, the dialectic can never begin. For no contradiction of the kind upon which the dialectic relies for its beginning and advance, can possibly be generated in the way this argument asserts it to be generated.

(Taken from *Mind*, October 1914),

The Logical Structure of Self-Refuting Systems

by

E. G. SPAULDING.

In my former paper I have analyzed and criticized the argument by which the 'internal view' is held to be established. This argument is the indirect one of first assuming the 'external view' for the purpose, subsequently, of showing it to be absurd, and then, second, of inferring that the opposed, the 'internal view' must be true. With the 'internal view' thus once accepted as true, it is interpreted as necessarily meaning that a relation in order to relate must either 'constitute' its terms, in part at least, or be mediated and conditioned by a unitary entity which is described, as either 'underlying' or as 'transcendent' to the terms and relation.......

The position (Ontological Absolutism) is derived primarily from the 'internal view' of relations, and so from the syllogism which also conditions phenomenalism, namely, syllogism 1. I. The infinite regress can be treated only by enumeration. II. That which can be only so treated is always incomplete. III. Conclusion. The infinite regress or that which involves it is always incomplete.

This conclusion, notwithstanding that its minor premise is self-refuting and its major at least ambiguous, is used, next, to reduce the 'external view', since this involves the infinite regress, to an absurdity, and so to establish (indirectly), the 'internal view'. Phenomenalism, however, employs the 'constitutive' interpretation of this view in order to reach its position that the known entity is modified or constituted in some degree by the knowing and so cannot be known except as so modified. Ontological Absolutism, however, not only discovers the fallacy of this conclusion, but

aims further to establish the 'underlying reality' interpretation of the 'internal view'. The position that there is a fallacy in phenomenalism is argued as follows : the criterion is assumed—syllogism. 2. I. That that which is presupposed by its own denial is (absolutely true.

The valid criticism is then made, giving the minor premise, II. That in every theory the knowableness of some entity, *i. e.* of some object, something-in-itself, even some proposition or doctrine or theory, as unmodified by the knowing, is presupposed even indeed when this is denied. This is the case, for example, in phenomenalism; for even the proposition, implied in that theory, that the thing-in-itself is unknowable, implies that it is known to the extent of at least this predicate. If to this extent, then why not more? Therefore the conclusion is drawn III. That ultimate reality is knowable, or, more formally, that the knowableness of ultimate reality is true.*

Here, in this conclusion, and in the premise preceding it, it is to be noticed, as bearing on the consistency of the system, that the presupposition is tacitly made that an entity is not modified by being known, *i. e.,* by virtue of being a term in the cognitive relation, briefly, that the 'external view' is tacitly presupposed as the logical condition for there being a (genuine) knowledge of an entity. To note this is important, since *from this point on* the attempt is made to construct the system by means of the 'internal view', *i. e.,* the endeavour is made to establish the 'underlying-reality' interpretation of this view. The argument for this constitutes the well-known, yet, as I shall demonstrate, self-refuting dialectical Hegelian method......

* As exemplifying the use of this argument in constructing systems of Ontological Absolutism, see Hegel's *Logik, Werke,* Vol. III. Book I, Sect. I, Ch. 1 and 2, also *Encylop. Werke,* Vol. VI.

My exposition has shown that Ontological Absolutism is constructed, first, by rejecting the 'external view' of relations and accepting the general 'internal view', and then, second, by eliminating the 'constitutive' interpretation of this last doctrine and arguing to the 'underlying reality' interpretation, an argument which is, however, full of snares. It has been shown further, that the opposed, 'the external view', is presupposed or employed tacitly and surreptitiously wherever correct and genuine knowledge of an entity is assumed whether this entity be proposition, or doctrine, or even the opposed 'internal view' and any system derived from this, or even that "absolute unconditioned" which is finally reached by indulging in a logical salvation. Indeed, that this is the case is tacitly recognised by Absolutism itself in its criticism of Phenomenalism in Syllogism 2. Ontological Absolutism is rendered self-refuting, then, through the inconsistency involved in the attempted, arbitrary use of the 'internal view' for certain purposes and the necessitated introduction or presupposition of the 'external view' in other connections. I would, therefore, focuss the issue sharply and clearly by challenging the Ontological Absolutist to be either consistent or inconsistent. Consistent use of the 'internal view' is impossible, since at one end it presupposes its contradictory and at the other breaks down only to again demand the 'external view' in order to get to the "Absolute unconditioned". And the inconsistency of using these opposed views arbitrarily in the same argument and connection—assuming one of them, the 'internal', and presupposing or introducing surreptitiously the other, the 'external view'—makes the system so constructed self-refuting and incapable of being regarded as a valid system. Until a valid range for the 'internal view' and the limits of the applicability of the 'external view' are established *empirically* and not manipulatively, genuine consistency is possible only by the original recognition and acceptance and continued use of the 'external view', since it is pre-

supposed in holding any proposition, doctrine, etc., to be true. But if the Ontological Absolutist adopt this alternative, he therewith cuts the ground from under his own feet, for the consistent use of the 'external view' annihilates his system logically. On the other hand, if he chooses either of the first two alternatives he stultifies himself intellectually, for by such a choice he voluntarily accepts a doctrine, or a method, and finally a system, one or all, which cannot be held to be true by their own logic and tenets, but which in one or more respects are self-refuting.

(Taken from the *Philosophical Review*, November, 1910).

The Philosophy of T. H. Green

by

SIDGWICK

Let us first take Green's positive account of Spirit, and ask, point by point, whether we can definitely think the qualities or functions he attributes to it, without in so thinking, predicating of it some of the relations which-according to Green-result from its combining and unifying activity, and are therefore not properly predicable of it.

First he conceives it as *one* and *many*. One Divine Mind and many reproductions of it; here we have relations of number.

Secondly the human spirit is identical with the Divine :– the latter is said to be a "Spirit which we ourselves are" : yet again it is a "reproduction" of it and a reproduction is different from the original. Here we have a peculiar and difficult combination of the relations of identity and difference.

Again, a Spirit is a "self-distinguishing" consciousness : that means, I suppose, that it attributes to itself unity, identity, difference from nature and, I suppose, from other

spirits. But again it is a "self-objectifying" consciousness: that is, it conceives itself as an object: and therefore in a relation of similarity with nature, so far as both spirit and nature must be thought as having whatever attributes are connoted by the word "object". Finally, it is a 'unifying' and 'combining' consciousness: but by each of these terms its function is conceived in a relation of similarity to processes that we conceive as occuring in Nature: Nature is continually presenting to us combinations and unifications, as well as separations and divisions.

In short, taking Green's descriptive terms, and endeavouring to think by means of them, we find that we are inevitably conceiving Spirit as conditioned or determined by the very same relations that we use in determining phenomena.

Turn now to the negative characterisation that he gives of Spirit, to emphasise and impress on us its non-naturalness. It is, he says, not in time, not in space, not a substance, not a cause. But can he really think it thus? Let us see.

First the Spirit is "not in Time". If so, we are to understand not merely that it does not change but that it does not perdure, since changing and perduring are equally time-determinations. Hence when Green speaks of the Divine Spirit as "eternal", we must understand him to intend to mean not "ever-lasting", but merely the same as when he speaks of it as "not in time". But can we conceive this to be his meaning when he speaks of it as "a consciousness for which the relations of fact that form the object of our gradually attained knowledge, *already* and *eternally* exist"; or when he speaks of the "best state of man as *already* present to a divine Consciousness"? Must we not think of the divine Consciousness as "in time" if we think of it as "already" such and such. So again, when speaking of the problem suggested by the constant spectacle of unfulfilled human promise, he says "we may con tent ourselves with

saying that the personal self-conscious being which comes from God, is for ever continued in God": surely here God is conceived as eternal in the sense of abiding "for ever". Again, it is because the divine mind reproduces itself in the human soul, that that soul is said to have a "spiritual" demand for an "abiding satisfaction of an abiding self"; but how could this be legitimately inferred unless the Divine Mind itself were conceived as abiding and perduring through Time?

But if "in time", why not a substance, since substance is for Green the permanent correlate of change? and can we avoid thinking of the Eternal Mind as the permanent correlate of the processes of change and development essential to finite minds?

Finally, can we conceive the Eternal Consciousness—following Green's thought—as not a cause? He tells us that it is a "source" of the relations which constitute Nature; that they "result from" its combining and unifying action; that it "makes the animal organism its vehicle"; that it "is operative" throughout the succession of events which constitute the growth of the individual mind; that it "acts on the sentient life of the soul" and "uses it" as its organ. Are not these all terms implying causality? And yet he says—arguing against Kant—that "causation has no meaning except as an unalterable connexion between changes in the world of our experience".

.... It appears, then, that Green ultimately attributes to God causality, but endeavours to establish essential difference between Divine and Natural Causality: viz., that the Eternal Consciousness, as unifying principle, has "no separate particularity" apart from the manifold world, "no character but that which it gives itself in 'its unifying' action"—although it "must act absolutely from itself in the action through which the world is". Now I cannot myself conceive those characteristics united: I cannot conceive anything

"acting absolutely from itself" and yet having "no character but that which it gives itself in this action". But, waiving this objection now, I admit that this negation of "character other than that which it gives itself in the action" differentiates the Causality of the Divine Mind profoundly from Natural Causality: but I think it does this at great cost to the system as a whole.

For, first, if God is thus reduced to a me re unifying principle, having no character except that which it gives itself in synthesising the manifold of nature, I do not see how the conception can be made to include the content which the ethical part of Green's doctrine requires. It is because there is a Divine Consciousness realising or reproducing itself in man that the true good of man is argued to be not Pleasure, but Virtue of Perfection, and the Perfection is held to consist in the realisation of capabilities already realised in the Divine Existence: briefly put, man's true good is development in the direction of becoming like to God. But this whole conception implies that God has what Mr. Balfour calls a 'Preferential Will' in relation to human life and action; and that his will is realised in man's choice of Virtue in a sense in which it is not realised in his choice of sensual pleasure. Well, I do not see how this conception can be maintained if God is also conceived as having no character except that self-given in unifying the manifold of nature: for this unification is surely equally effected in the lives of sinners and in the lives of saints, as both are equally capable of being scientifically known. In short, this conception of the relation of God to the world seems to me to constitute a gulf between Green's Metaphysics and his Ethics which cannot be bridged over.

If on the other hand, we leave Ethics aside, and confine ourselves to the conception of the Divine Spirit regarded as belonging to the *Metaphysics of Knowledge*, it seems to me that this eternal consciousness, characterless apart from its unifying action, is a rather insignificant entity: whose exis-

tence is not only difficult to establish logically, but not much worth establishing. The conception, indeed, of the world as a systematic whole, having unity and order through the complex relations of its parts, as well as infinite plurality and diversity; and the conception of the progress of knowledge as consisting in the continual discovery of order, system and unity in what at first presents itself as an almost chaotic diversity—these are conceptions of the highest value. But when they are grasped, what is the further gain to knowledge in referring the unity and system to a unifying principle as its source, if that principle is to have no other character except what it gives itself in its unifying action. Is there any hope that such a conception can in any way help us to *grasp* the unity, the system of relations, more fully and truly? Nay, must not the notion of a Divine Mind, if reduced so far, inevitably dwindle still further, and reveal itself as merely a hypostasised logical element or aspect of the knowable world regarded as a systematic whole?

And this view, I think, will be confirmed by a rigorous examination of Green's main argument for establishing the existence of a spiritual principle in nature. It is the source of the relations that constitute experience a connected whole: but where lies the logical necessity of assuming such a source? Green answers that the existence of the relations involves "the unity of the manifold, the existence of the many in one"..."But," he says, "a plurality of things cannot of themselves unite in one relation, nor can a single thing of itself bring itself into a multitude of relations...there must-"therefore"-be something other than the manifold things themselves which combines them". The argument seems to me unthinkable, because, as Green has emphatically declared, I cannot even conceive the manifold things out of the relations: and therefore I cannot even raise the question whether if I could so conceive them, I should see them to require something other than themselves to bring them into the relations.

But (secondly) Green has another line of argument. He can–he does–appeal to self-consciousness. "The action of our own mind in knowledge"–he says–"gives us a positive conception of the action of the Divine Mind in the universe." Now for myself, in attaining knowledge, I seem to *find* not to *originate* truth. But, granting the human consciousness of "action absolutely from itself" in knowledge, can we infer from this the action of the Universal Mind, consistently with Green's theory of the human spirit? For if my self-consciousness is to be the *causa cognoscendi* of the causality of the *unifying* principle in the world, that self-consciousness must surely include an indubitable cognition of the essential unity of the self: but in trying to think Green's conception of the human spirit, I find the notion of its essential unity vanishes. "Our consciousness", he says, "may mean either of two things; either a function of the animal organism, which is being gradually made a vehicle of the eternal consciousness: or that eternal consciousness itself, as making the animal organism its vehicle." He then assures us that our consciousness is still "one indivisible reality": and that the two things just distinguished are merely two aspects of it, the same thing regarded from two different points of view. I cannot think myself thus: I cannot think God as one aspect of me, and my body as another aspect: and it seems to me that, if I did succeed in thinking this, the essential unity of self would have vanished. Green adduces the old simile of the opposite sides of a shield: but it seems to me inapt. For I see clearly that a shield not only *may* but *must* have two opposite sides, united into a continuous surface by the rim: whereas I cannot see how one indivisible self can possibly have as its two sides an animal organism and a self-limiting eternal consciousness.*

(Taken from "*Mind*," January, 1901).

*"In summary of the preceding criticism of Green's statement, we may note that the crucial issues turn around the principle of 'under-

The Metaphysics of Mr. F. H. Bradley

by

H. RASHDALL

Mr. Bradley has no doubt that the Absolute is experience, and he everywhere assumes that experience means conscious experience. If he will not call the Absolute "Mind", he definitely calls it "Spirit". But I submit that he has no right to deny to the Absolute all the characteristics of consciousness as we know it—to deny to it the power of knowing either itself or anything else, and still to call it consciousness or experience. In justification of such a procedure, Mr. Bradley appeals to that lowest form of consciousness in which feeling is not yet differentiated from knowing, in which there is as yet no apprehended contrast between logical subject and logical predicate. Of course he admits that this is a mere and a distant analogy: he admits that he does not know what such a not-knowing consciousness is like. But I submit that the analogy does not help us. To point to the existence of a consciousness which is below knowing does not help us to understand, or without under-

standing, or 'consciousness' and its relation to the 'content' or 'data' within cognitive experience on the one side, and, on the other, to the trans-empirical character of these data. The chief difficulties of his formulation arise, first, out of his insistence that the given is organised *ab extra* by means of relations that spring exclusively from the 'understanding,' and second, out of his virtual denial of any trans-empirical character to the 'matter' of experience. If the "spiritual principle" contributes the character of relational organisation to an alien content, how it achieves this remains a mystery. If the given in experience is devoid of any trans-empirical reference, it is equally mysterious how knowledge can refer to anything which can be called nature in the sense of an objective order, independent of human experience"

(Cunningham's "The Idealistic Argument in Recent British and American Philosophy", 1933)

standing to believe in, the existence of a consciousness which is above knowing, and yet (strange to say) includes knowing. ... All speculations about lower kinds of consciousness being swallowed up or combined in a higher kind of consciousness must be dismissed as involving unthinkable contradictions. ... The mental experience of making a mistake can never be swallowed up or merged in an experience which involves no mistake: mental confusion is a reality which can never be transmuted into an experience in which all is clear, consistent, and' harmonious'. An experience in which that distinction is 'transcended' is not the same experience as mine. 'Everything' is "what it is and not another thing"... An experience in which contradictions and one-sidedness should have disappeared, or been swallowed up, or transformed into something else would not be the whole. A knowledge in which they appeared to be so transmuted could not be true knowledge of the whole.*...To talk about a One which somehow 'includes' many members without being related to any of them and without their being related to one another is simply to take back with one phase what

* "There seems to be a contradiction in holding that the same experience can be both self-contradictory as it stands, as absolute idealism usually holds, and yet through some process of transmutation perfectly harmonious and self-consistent as part of the Absolute. Either the contradiction in my experience is real, or it is merely apparent. If the former, my experience cannot be real even as part of the Absolute, for, if it really contradicts itself, it simply cannot exist, and if it is internally self-contradictory it cannot be made self-consistent by being brought into relation to other things B + not − B + C + D must still be as contradictory as B + not − B was by itself, though no doubt this difficulty was obscured for the absolutist by the views I have criticised in my account of 'Degrees of Truth'. If, on the other hand, the contradiction is merely apparent, then the absolutist doctrine that all parts of a true whole are, when taken alone, self-contradictory breaks down, and the so-called contradiction is merely a mistake of ours, though perhaps an inevitable one."

(A. C. Ewing's "Idealism: A Critical Survey." 1934)

nas been conceded by another. Inclusion is after all for our thought a relation, and we have no other thoughts by which to think...Even if we suppose that the idea of relation in general—or the relation of whole and part in particular—is inadequate to the nature of Reality, the idea of a relationless Reality or (what is the same thing) of a whole without any parts at all is likely to be still more so. . . .

The general conclusion of his whole argument is that, though everything is appearance, yet "in our appearance we can discover the main nature of reality." If it were true that the Absolute is out of time, while the appearances are all in time, it certainly could not be said that we could discover the main nature of Reality from the appearances. The difference between an existence in time and an existence out of time is so fundamental, so abysmal, that it is difficult to say what the one could have in common with the other. Mr. Bradley is, as it appears to me, too sceptical in his premises, much too dogmatic in his conclusions. He is too sceptical about the validity of our knowledge in its parts; he is too unwarrantably confident and dogmatic in his assertions about the Universe as a whole. The difficulties which he insists upon about time do not warrant the assertion that the Absolute is out of time, or that time-distinctions are purely subjective or in any sense unreal. But they do warrant the assertion that we do not and cannot understand fully the nature of time, and consequently cannot fully understand the nature of ultimate Reality. Till this difficulty is removed, the pretentious systems, Hegelian or other, which profess to explain all difficulties and to give full and complete insight into the ultimate nature of things are doomed to failure.*

(The Proceedings of the British Academy Vol. IV.)

* "How could a timeless reality be the cause of a succession in time? So far as a thing is timeless, it cannot change, for with change time comes necessarily. But how can a thing which does not change

The Contradiction of Appearance and Reality

by

M. B. FOSTER

"Bradley starts from the thesis that nothing determined by a relation is real, and he is unable to escape from the conclusion that Reality itself is determined by a relation, by its relation namely to Appearance...Reality stands in a

produce an effect in time? That the effect was produced in time implies that it had a beginning And if the effect begins, while no beginning can be assigned to the cause, we are left to choose between two alternatives Either there is something in the effect–namely, the quality of coming about as a change—which is altogether uncaused. Or the timeless reality is only a partial cause, and is determined to act by something which is not timeless In either case, the timeless reality fails to explain the succession in time For the process in time is, by the hypothesis, the root of all irrationality, and how can it spring from anything which is quite free of irrationality? Why should a concrete and perfect whole proceed to make itself imperfect, for the sake of gradually getting rid of the imperfection again? If it gained nothing by the change, could it be completely rational to undergo it? But if it had anything to gain by the change, how could it previously have been perfect? ...For any self-determination of a cause to produce its effect must be due to some incompleteness in the former without the latter But if the cause, by itself was incomplete it could not, by itself, be perfect If, on the other hand it was perfect, it is impossible to see how it could produce anything else as an effect. Its perfection makes it in complete harmony with itself. And, since it is all reality, there is nothing outside it with which it could be out of harmony. What could determine it to production?

Thus we oscillate between two extremes, each equally fatal If we endeavour to treat evil as absolutely unreal, we have to reject the one basis of all knowledge—'experience'. But in so far as we accept evil as a manifestation of reality, we find it impossible to avoid qualifying the cause by the nature of the effect which it produces, and so contradicting the main result of the dialectic—the harmony and perfection of the Absolute."

(Mc. Taggart's "Hegelian Dialectic")

relation and is therefore, like everything relational, mere appearance...If the Absolute *is* a substance with qualities, it comes under the annihilating criticism of Bradley's own second chapter; it is conditioned by its adjectives and therefore mere appearance...He cannot specify the relation between Appearance and Reality, and is reduced therefore to an insistence on their absolute difference tempered by the emphatic assertion of their absolute identity ; "they are different" and "they are the same"—the whole book is an oscillation between these contradictory alternatives...The same oscillation shows itself in another way. So long as Bradley approaches his problem from the side of Appearance, he is content to display its contradiction and to assert its utter unreality : and this is as true of the subjects of his Second Part as of those of his First Part. The same method is applied, e. g., to "Goodness" in chap. XXV, as to "Causation" in chap. VI.: each is found to contradict itself, and the one can do no less and the other can do no more. But when Bradley approaches his problem from the other side and asks "What is reality"? Bradley replies "Reality is the Whole, or the System of its Appearances" and this implies that appearances are absolutely real, since a real whole must consist of real parts and a real system of real components.§ And so he vacillates between the two indispensably complementary but irreconcilably contradictory assertions, that Appearance is not reality and that Reality is nothing but appearance.

To repeat and to sum up :

There is no escape for Bradley from this fundamental dilemma :—if he defines the relation between the Absolute *and its appearances, he must admit that the Absolute is limited* by that relation and is therefore appearance; if he leaves it undefined, still it is no less a relation, and *because*

§ *This* was *Ward's* criticism (see **Mind, Jan. 1925, P. 32**) and seems indisputably sound.

it is undefined, it keeps him swinging between the alternatives of bare denial and bare assertion of an abstract identity.

. ... He endeavours to escape from it by means of his supplementary doctrine of Degrees of Truth and Reality (the presence of Reality among its appearances in different degrees and with diverse values).... But we must insist that it is not a doctrine which Bradley could consistently hold, and that it provides him with no way of escape from the dilemma we noted above... Bradley has already surveyed the provinces of the phenomenal world, and included them in a common condemnation as appearance. The criterion by which they were condemned as appearance, *this* and no other must be the criterion of their reality. There can be no degrees of reality unless there were previously degrees of appearance. But in Bradley's condemnation there were no degrees. If the 'two-fold' criterion of reality is the same as that which he himself employed ("Anything the meaning of which is inconsistent and unintelligible is appearance and not reality,") to reduce everything finite to a common level of unreality, it can produce no other result than has been already achieved, and if it is different, it is not a criterion of reality. And with this we may dismiss the doctrine of Degrees of Reality from a consideration of Bradley's Philosophy."

(Taken from *Mind*, 1930).

CHAPTER V.

The Theory of God as the illusory material and efficient cause of the world Examined.

INTRODUCTION.

It has been explained in Book I that according to this school of religio-philosophical thought the ultimate Reality and Ground of the universe is one non-dual differenceless, changeless, attributeless, self-luminous Existence or Consciousness, in which there is no distinction of parts or aspects, which admits of no real modification, which cannot be really related as a cause to any effect or as a substance to any attribute, and which cannot be an object of any knowledge nor can have any subject-object-relation within Itself. This theory demonstrates that though this non-dual self-luminous Existence is the ultimate Ground and Reality of all existences, still the universe cannot be either the true modification (परिणाम) or the real qualification (विशेषण) or the actual reflection (प्रतिबिम्ब) of this absolute Reality, but it must be conceived as an illusory appearance, produced on this changeless substratum through the apparent identification with It of a neither-real-nor-unreal inexplicable positive principle destructible by true knowledge of that substratum. This inexplicable principle, called Cosmic Ignorance, being eternally identified with the non-dual consciousness, modifies itself into the forms of various kinds of conscious and unconscious entities, which are illusorily manifested as the products of that Reality.

According to this school, the self-evident scripture, which is the verbal embodiment of the self-revelation of

the Absolute Truth, is the highest authority about the nature of this Reality. They think that no argument can invalidate their conclusion about Reality, because all arguments are inevitably based on normal experience of invariable relations and the interpretation of and generalisations from them made by finite human understanding. The adherents hold that the exclusive validity of the conceptions learnt from the scriptural texts can also be logically proved. The exponents of this doctrine, as we have found in Book I, adduce various arguments to prove their conceptions.

I. To prove that the ultimate Reality is one absolute non-dual and attributeless consciousness, they show that (a) Being or Existence is the one universal substratum of all objects, that (b) Consciousness is the witness of the universe, that (c) the essence of the said consciousness is self-luminosity and it is non-different from Existence.

II. The illusory character of the universe in relation to the Absolute Reality they establish by examining the nature of causality and pointing out that the theory of illusory causation is the only reasonable theory, which can consistently explain the appearance of the world on the substratum of changeless non-dual Existence and that the world cannot be explained either as existent or non-existent or existent as well as non-existent. Such an inexplicable thing, they say, is at no time really present in its substratum.

III. That the cosmic Ignorance is the material cause of the universe, they prove by showing that the inexplicable effect produced on the changeless Substratum should have an inexplicable principle associated with the Substra-

tum as its modifying material cause. Having proved that cosmic Ignorance is the root material cause of the illusory appearance of the universe and that the Substratum of the universe is Existence-Consciousness, the upholders of the said doctrine explain Godhood as due to the universal identification of the non-dual Existence-Consciousness with Cosmic Ignorance ; so God is conceived by them as the non-dual self-luminous Brahman apparently conditioned by inexplicable Ignorance and as such He is regarded as having a relative conditional apparent existence. Thus God is conceived relatively and conditionally as the one self-conscious and self-determining omniscient Personal Being and as the illusory material and efficient cause of the universe.

In our critical examination of the above doctrine, we have to consider the following points :—

I. Whether there is any proof or argument in favour of that Something which they call attributeless Reality, II. whether the theory of Illusory causation can be proved, III. whether Ignorance can be taken as the modified cause of the universe, and finally whether even after granting the validity of the conclusion about the witness-consciousness and positive Ignorance, it is possible to ascertain even empirical reality of God.

Now, let us proceed to show that the afore-said conclusions cannot be reasonably held.

SECTION I.

The Proofs in favour of the attributeless Reality Examined.

(a). Self-evidence of the Scriptures Refuted.

The first and primary proof for ascertaining that the ultimate Reality is an attributeless, differenceless Consciousness is that it is so proclaimed by the scriptures, and these scriptures are the self-evident sources of knowledge. Let us show at first that self-evidence of the scriptures cannot be admitted. When we find that different scriptures contradict each other, that the same scriptural text is divergently interpreted and that efforts are made to create in others a belief in those scriptures, we cannot be sure about the self-evidence of the scriptures. It is popularly believed that the scriptures are self-evident, because they are the scriptures. But this argument is either tautological or illogical. As yet their self-evidence has not been proved, so the reason put forward above cannot be accepted. What is the subject of a discussion cannot be taken as established from the very beginning. What is to be proved by an inference cannot be brought forth as its reason. It is irrational to accept the Vedas as infallible authority without any questioning. The advocates, by means of an analogy from the acceptance of the laws of thought and of self-evident truths, seek to show that the procedure is perfectly rational. This is of course a common, but surely an erroneous, view. The laws of thought are necessarily, not voluntarily, accepted by Reason. They are presuppositions of all reasoning and simply cannot be questioned, because any inquiry into their validity necessarily presupposes their

validity. Nor are self-evident propositions which are not presuppositions of all reasoning accepted through faith. We just apprehend that they must be true, and this apprehension of necessity is not an exercise of faith, but of reason at its purest. Besides, the Vedas is not a proposition and cannot be reduced to one. There is no semblance of rationality about accepting the Vedas on its own authority as infallible. The question, Why in particular the Vedas? is legitimate, and that means that the theory of Vedic infallibility must be examined in the same way as any other theory.*

* The Vedāntists declare that reasoning is without any finality (तर्काप्रतिष्ठानात्), that is, they want to discard reasoning and establish the validity of the Scriptures as a superior source of true knowledge. On the ground that one person's careful reasoning is found to be refuted by others, they think that they are justified in discarding reasoning as a source of the knowledge of the ultimate truth. But this well-known fact will not establish their right to uphold the validity of the scriptures. It is also a well-known fact that the same scripture is interpreted differently by different commentators. If owing to the fact that one's reasoning is refuted by another, reasoning itself is discarded, then they should not also try to ascertain the meaning of the scriptures in their own way, because their interpretation of them may also be refuted by others To ascertain that this is what the scriptures say, our only refuge is to make out their meaning by the help of reasoning. If mere reading of the scriptures would have yielded their conclusive meaning, then there would have been an end to divergent views among those who regard the very same scripture as valid Moreover, it should not be forgotten that without first ascertaining the purport of the scriptures, one cannot find out reasonings which favour the theme of the scriptures and which does not. So the assurance that you put forward reasoning which favours your scriptures is meaningless. Nor can you label antagonistic reasonings as defective without finding fault with them.

Besides, it is well-known that without the help of a source of valid knowledge, nothing can get established. Now let us ask what proof is there in favour of their contention that all reasoning is non-

The inference, namely, that the scriptures are self-evident because they contain informations about supersensuous truths, is not also sound. As long as these supersensuous entities are not observed or otherwise logically proved, their validity cannot be established. The assertions made in these scriptures might as well have been the products of the imagination of the individual thinkers. That the scriptural assertions are something more than products of imagination and charming hypothesis requires to be proved by valid reasoning. The various grounds stated by different schools of thought for proving the infallibility of the scriptures we have considered at length in the first chapter of this Book and they have all been found unconvincing. Hence we are not justified in accepting the assertions of the books regarded as scriptures without rational proof. It is argued that the scriptures create in us the knowledge of

final It cannot be perception, because innumerable reasonings of the past and the future cannot be perceived. Nor can all reasonings of the present be present, so that they may be perceived by any one. The alleged proof cannot be inference The inference of the non-finality of reasoning demands putting forth some reasoning. That reasoning must be either established or non-established? If it is non-established, then their theme will not be established. If it is established, then the non-finality of reasoning is thereby disproved. In other words, as their own reasoning is established, they cannot reasonably say that all reasonings are non-established. Nor by verbal testimony, the above can be proved Because perception and inference are unavailing, verbal testimony cannot in this case command recognition.

Thus it is shown that the advocates of the scriptural authority cannot be allowed to accept the validity of the scriptures without giving any reason for their belief in them. And the alleged grounds of this belief, we have refuted already. Thus it comes to this that they cannot, on the assumed authority of the Scriptures, at the very beginning take for granted the non-dual Reality as the substratum of all appearances.

the eternal transcendental Truth, which is not and cannot be negated at any time. But this is itself a dogmatic assertion and cannot be accepted as a rational argument. Before the validity of the scriptures has been established, and the reality of the object or objects they speak of is rationally proved, this reason cannot be advanced. Besides, the question may be asked, is there any evidence other than the scriptures themselves to prove that the truths which these scriptures claim to establish are eternal immutable undeniable truths? If any such evidence is admitted, then the authority of the scriptures as the conclusive source of the knowledge of these truths need not be believed in, and the exponents of the theory have to establish these truths on the ground of such independent evidence. If on the other hand no such evidence is available, then the authority of the scriptures is not established, because there is the fallacy of interdependence; the eternity and immutableness of the subject-matter of the scriptures being proved by the authority of the scriptures, and the authority of the scriptures being proved on the ground of the eternity and immutableness of the subject-matter.

It is argued that when the scriptural text produces the knowledge in a properly disciplined mind prepared for receiving it, the truth reveals itself to it with the stamp of eternity and immutableness and produces the conviction that it can never be contradicted and proved to be false at any time. Thus this conviction of eternity and immutableness in the present time is the evidence for the eternity and immutableness of the object of the knowledge, and as this knowledge could not be acquired from any source other than the scriptures, the authority of the scriptures also is established.

Now, the question is, what is meant by this stamp of eternity and immutableness of the scriptural truth ? Does it mean that when the knowledge of such a truth is produced, the object is experienced as related to the beginningless past and the endless future and found to be uncontradicted by any knowledge of the past or the future ? Or does it mean that when the knowledge is attained from the scriptures, the object is experienced as undeniable at that present moment and hence it is inferred that it is undeniable at all times ? Or does it mean that eternity and immutableness are attributes characterising the object of scriptural knowledge and that the knowledge of these attributes forms part of the knowledge of the object ? The first alternative is not sound. In that case all possible knowledge of all knowing beings of the past and the future as well as all possible objects of all such knowledge have to be simultaneously present along with the knowledge of the alleged scriptural truth at the moment of the production of this knowledge, in order that this truth may be compared with all other objects of all possible knowledge. This is obviously absurd and cannot be claimed by the exponents of the scriptural authority. The second alternative is not tenable. The inference would then be obviously groundless, because even in cases of illusions, hallucinations, dreams and hypnotic suggestions, the objects of knowledge appear as undeniable for the time being. Hence this conviction of undeniableness at the time of experience cannot be a criterion even of the validity of phenomenal knowledge, not to speak of the eternity and immutableness of the object of knowledge. The third alternative is not logical. In that case also, it cannot amount to a proof of the reality of these attributes of the object of scriptural knowledge. Because the question would arise, what is the nature of this knowledge ? Is it perceptual knowledge or

inferential knowledge or a different form of knowledge arising from the authority of the scriptures? The alleged eternal and immutable truth cannot evidently be an object of sense-perception, and no object of sense-perception can be regarded as possessing these characteristics. The knowledge cannot be regarded as inferential, for no invariable concomitance is available in the world of sense-perception to serve as a ground for the inference of such a reality. If it is a special kind of knowledge produced by the authority of the scriptures, then these scriptures become the sole ground for accepting the validity of such knowledge, and the validity of the scriptures, when put to the test, cannot be established on the ground of such knowledge, without committing the fallacy of Interdependence.

Another question that arises in this connection is, does the same scriptural text produce exactly the same knowledge with the same degree of certitude in every mind? There is ample evidence to show that it does not. If it did, the believers in the scriptures would not differ so much in their conception of the ultimate Reality and different authoritative commentators would not lay emphasis upon different texts as representing the true nature of the Reality. When any particular interpreter claims acceptance for his own version, he has to take his stand on reason. Hence it is the logical validity of a doctrine that is accepted as the final criterion of truth even by the believers in the scriptural authority. Consequently, the appeal to the scriptures becomes superfluous, or at least the scriptural texts may be regarded as hypotheses to argue upon.

Moreover, it is said that in order to comprehend the true meaning of the scriptural texts, a systematic course of moral and religious discipline is necessary for creating a

right attitude of mind and preparing the mind for receiving them in the proper spirit. The simple implication of this preliminary training of the mind appears to be that with differences of mental outlook the scriptural texts are likely to produce different ideas about the ultimate Reality and that without an already acquired unquestioning faith the knowledge produced would not appear with the stamp of certainty, eternity and immutableness of the truth. Hence the reliableness of the scriptures does not lie so much in their own self-evidence as in the relying attitude of the particular mind. Consequently they cannot be universally accepted as the source of valid knowledge about the ultimate Truth. What is ultimately true must stand on independent evidence and necessary laws of thought and must not depend upon any mental attitude or any outlook created by some particular type of moral and religious discipline.

Moreover, you yourselves, inspite of your belief in the supreme authority of the scriptures, cannot treat them as ultimately valid, because in that case either you are to regard God as the object illumined by scriptural knowledge which is independent of Him and expressible by scriptural words which do not owe their existence to Him, or you are to regard God as the revealer of this knowledge and author of these words, and both of these alternatives are inconsistent with the self-luminosity and attributelessness of the ultimate Reality. To conceive the ultimate Reality as the attributeless changeless absolute consciousness beyond thought and speech and at the same time to regard it either as the author or as the object of scriptural knowledge and words involves an obvious self-contradiction. Hence the scriptures can in no way be accepted as the source of valid knowledge about the ultimate differenceless attributeless changeless Reality.

(b) The possible ways of knowing Reality Examined.

Now, let us examine if the attributeless Reality is capable of being proved by the sources of valid knowledge recognised by the advocates of this view.

(1). Perception cannot prove attributeless Reality.

Perception cannot be a proof in favour of the attributeless Reality. No undifferentiated, attributeless Reality can possibly be an object of perception. Perception requires a direct contact between the senses and the object, and such an object must have attributes capable of producing impressions upon the senses, and must have form limited in space and changeable in time. The existence of any Reality devoid of these characteristics cannot be an object of sense-perception. Hence it is out of the question to prove the existence of an attributeless changeless Reality by means of perception.

(2). Inference cannot prove attributeless Reality.

By inference also such an attributeless consciousness cannot be established. An inference must be dependent on the knowledge of invariable concomitance furnished by experience. The knowledge of invariable concomitance is the ascertainment of the particular relation of the ground of inference with the thing to be proved. This relation is perceived by the perception of both the related terms. If either of the terms be unperceived or beyond the scope of perception, then the concomitance can not be established. In the present case, Brahman is admittedly not an object of sense-perception. And hence the relation of the ground of the alleged inference with Brahman will not be known.

Consequently, there is no means of establishing the existence of a differenceless attributeless consciousness or Brahman on the strength of any kind of invariable concomitance.

Moreover, if you are to infer the existence of the attributeless Reality, then you are to treat this Reality as the cause of the effect-world. Thus, the character of the world as an effect would be the ground of your inference. But on the ground that the world is an effect, it cannot be inferred that its cause must necessarily be the attributeless consciousness without sufficient additional reasons for such an inference, because otherwise various other rival hypotheses may be framed to account for the production of the world. Whether the reasons adduced for proving the production of the world from such a Reality are strong enough to establish this claim, we shall consider hereafter.

Moreover, as the attributeless Reality is not and cannot be really the cause of any thing, therefore it is not valid to infer that Reality on the ground of the character of the world as an effect. By inference we can know simply that, since every effect must have a cause, the world being of the nature of an effect must have some cause. But we cannot infer what the character of that cause must be, far less that the cause is attributeless. We can rather draw a contrary inference, viz. that the cause of the world must have attributes, because in our experience all causes of all effects are found to have attributes.

Besides, according to this theory, the relation of attribute with substance is a difference that does not differentiate the existence of the former from that of the latter,

and it also maintains that a difference between two terms can be regarded as real only when the existence of one is differentiated from the existence of the other. Accordingly it has to be concluded that the difference between substance and attribute is not a real difference. This unreal difference can be explained only by regarding the attribute as not real in the sense in which the substance is real. By the application of this principle it is deduced that the attributes ascribed to the ultimate Reality i. e. Brahman are unreal and hence Brahman must be inferred to be essentially attributeless. But if the relation of the attribute with its substratum is taken as unreal, then the difference between the substance of sense-experience and the attributes perceived in them, such as the pot and its colour etc. also must be regarded as unreal. and consequently all the substances of the world of experience should have to be regarded as attributeless. That is, in accordance with this principle we cannot say that the pot is really possessed of the particular size, shape, colour and other attributes, because they are not really related to the pot. Consequently, the pots, the cloths, the trees, men, etc. should all be regarded as essentially attributeless and there should be no difference among them. Hence this method of proving attributelessness of Reality is not sound. Later on we shall show the incongruities involved in the recognition of the same sort of relation between the cause and the effect. Thus we find that the existence of the attributeless ultimate Reality cannot be established by means of the process of inference.

(3) Analogy cannot prove attributeless Reality.

Nor is such Reality capable of being established by means of analogy. Analogy is based on the knowledge of

similarity. But because the said Reality is taken as beyond all attributes, its similarity with anything whatsoever, whether conscious or unconscious, cannot be experienced, and hence analogy cannot be operative in its case.

(4) Implication cannot prove attributeless Reality.

The source of valid knowledge known as implication (अर्थापत्ति) cannot apply here, because Reality is taken to be indifferent (उदासीन) i. e. absolutely unrelated. When we see things which cannot be accounted for except by guessing something else not perceived, then that something is accepted as real by virtue of the necessity of explaining those objects of experience. Implication has applicability only in such cases. Because the said Reality is conceived as indifferent or neutral or unrelated with all things of experience, it cannot explain anything and consequently the recognition of its existence cannot be necessitated to account for any object of experience. If it be argued that in order to account for the production and sustenance of the world-process, the recognition of this ultimate Reality is necessary, then that Reality cannot be regarded as indifferent or unrelated to the world-process and conception of the ultimate Reality, as cherished by the exponents of this view, will be contradicted. Whether the conception of such a Reality is logically maintainable and whether its recognition can in any way help the explanation of the world-process will be examined in details afterwards.

(5) Occult perception or Yogic vision cannot prove the attributeless Reality.

Though sense-perception, inference, analogy or implication cannot give any valid knowledge of the ultimate Reality, it may be supposed that the attributeless conscious-

ness is knowable through occult perception or Yogic vision (यौगिक प्रत्यक्ष). We come across persons, who as a result of some specific forms of physical and mental self-discipline and continued practice of such vows as systematic prayer, fasting, sacrifice, mortification, utterance of mystic words (*Mantras*), concentration of mind upon certain objects, etc. under specified conditions, acquire extraordinary powers of perceiving phenomena which occurred in the past or which will occur in the future or which are occurring at present beyond the range of sense-perception or which are otherwise incapable of being perceived by the senses. The validity of such perception is often verified by unmistakable positive proofs. It may be contended that as in such cases direct perception of objects takes place without any contact between the senses and the objects, such direct occult perception by the suitably cultured minds of *Yogins* may be the reliable source of valid knowledge of the Absolute Reality.

But by analysis of the facts referred to here, we find that the contention is not tenable. In such extraordinary cases also, it is found that what are seen are objects with visible properties, what are heard are objects with audible properties, and so on, though the spatial and temporal remoteness of the objects from the physical body of the percipient and the limitations of the ordinarily developed senses of perception may render the objects incapable of being perceived by the senses. By suitable practices the powers of perception as well as of action of the mind and the senses may be immensely developed and the mind may even acquire the power of receiving subtle impressions which are left by past objects that disappeared from the range of gross perception, those which are coming from distant objects that are outside the range of gross perception as well as those which are produced by future objects that have

not yet come within the range of gross perception. These facts of supranormal perception may be adduced by thinkers to prove that the past objects are not absolutely extinct and the future are not absolutely non-existent to come newly into being. They may go some way to show that our conception of the past, the distant and the future are relative to our imperfect powers of the mind and the senses.

Whatever may be the explanations of these facts of occult perception, they furnish no ground to believe that a Being without any perceptible properties can be the object of such perception. Moreover, the validity of such perception also requires to be verified by reference to facts of direct normal experience : otherwise mere occult experience of particular individuals can be no sure proof of the reality of the objects of such experience, since it may be vitiated by confusion with auto-suggestion, external suggestion, imagination, predisposition etc. But such verification of the occult perception (if possible) of the Absolute Reality is not possible. Hence the attributeless Existence cannot be known to be real by means of occult perception.

(6) Trance-intuition cannot realise the attributeless Reality.

Another source that may be claimed for the knowledge of the Absolute attributeless Existence is Trance-intuition (समाधिज प्रज्ञा). It is held that when as a result of the practice of deep meditation the mind is for the time being completely free from unsteadiness and perfectly emancipated from the impurities of desires, passions, prejudices and sensuous impressions, it attains the state of trance (समाधि). It is claimed that at this state of the mind the Absolute

self-luminous Reality reveals Itself as It essentially is to this pure steady transparent mind. The mind, being then free from all sorts of modifications and uninfluenced by any other changing finite object of knowledge, becomes identified with the self-luminous attributeless consciousness and experiences this consciousness as the non-dual Reality.

Here the first question that should arise is whether the state of trance is or is not a state of the mind like the states of waking, dream, deep sleep, swoon, hysteric fit etc. If it be a state on a par with, though distinct from, the other states, how can the experience of the mind at that state have any exclusive claim to be regarded as representing the true nature of the Absolute Reality as It is ? Just as in the other states of the individual mind there are characteristic experiences, so in the state of trance also there may be some specific experience. As in dream there is the experience of diverse kinds of objects, as in deep sleep there is the experience of peace and ignorance, so in trance there may be the experience of differenceless blissful consciousness. Since it represents the experience of a particular state of the mind, it is purely subjective, and cannot be accepted as the true knowledge of the Absolute Reality, unless there are adequate rational grounds for accepting it as such. If on the other hand the trance is not regarded as a state of the mind, then it has to be explained what it is. It is universally admitted that trance is attained as the result of the practice of deep meditation, though in exceptional cases there may be a sudden cessation of all other mental functions and the experience of trance. Now, if the trance is not a special state of the mind, then either the mind is to be regarded as dead and non-existent or it is to be regarded as existing in an altogether unmanifested state without any function whatsoever. That the mind is not dead or non-

existent is evident from the fact that there is rise (व्युत्थान) from trance and the various functions of mind are experienced after it. Hence the mind is to be regarded as existing at the time of trance in an unmanifested and functionless state. If the mind is functionless, then according to the view under discussion, the differenceless witness-consciousness alone shines in its self-luminosity, and there being no subject-object-relation within its nature, it can have no experience, and even if the differenceless consciousness can be said to have any kind of experience, it is unrelated to the mind and therefore unknowable and unrememberable to it.

It is maintained by the exponents of this theory that no knowledge or experience, in the sense in which we understand it, is possible without modification of the mind or the ego, illumined by the self-luminous consciousness ; the non-dual self-luminous consciousness, being by itself without subject-object-relation and being the illuminer of knowledge as well as ignorance, can not in its essential character be either the subject or the object of knowledge. Now the question is, does any mental modification occur at the state of trance ? Here, those who practise deep meditation and attain *Samādhi* or trance, distinguish between two stages of trance, viz. trance with subtle mental modification (सविकल्प) and trance without any mental modification (निर्विकल्प). They are also regarded as trance with knowledge (संप्रज्ञात) and trance without knowledge (असंप्रज्ञात). The trance with subtle mental modification is admitted to be the culmination of the practice of deep concentration or one-pointedness (एकाग्रता) of the mind upon some definite desirable object. As a result of continued voluntary practice of such concentration, the mind becomes temporarily modified into the subtle form of the object and the uninterrupted

stream of mental modification into the form of the same object flows without any will or effort for some time, the attention being so deeply absorbed in the object that it is not even diverted towards the subject itself as distinguished from the object. If the concept of the self itself is objectified and concentrated upon, it leads to the experience of the subject becoming the object,—to a sense of complete unity within and without. But in this form of trance the subtle mental modification continues, the subject-object-relation exists, and the object of experience is nothing but the idea of the object already chosen for meditation, this idea being most vividly realised within and engrossing the entire modifying mind. In this trance knowledge in a general sense is no doubt present, but what is asserted to be intuition of Reality or realisation of Truth is nothing but the perfect self-forgetting self-identification with a cherished Idea or Ideal. According to the differences of ideas or ideals cherished at the time of the practice of meditation, the actual trance-experiences also, as testified to by the different types of *Sadhakas* after coming down from the trance-state, are found to differ. Hence this sort of trance with mental modification or knowledge cannot be regarded as the valid experience of the Absolute Reality. Even if the trance-knowledge had any objective validity, it could not make the differenceless subject-object-less self-luminous Existence its object, for this would be inconsistent with the self-luminosity and non-duality of this Existence. Since according to this theory the ego, the object and the modification are all illumined by this Existence, this Existence cannot be the object of the mental modification.

With regard to the other, which is regarded as the highest form of *Samādhi*, viz. that in which no mental modification is present, there cannot be, according to the

admission of the exponents of this theory, any kind of knowledge at all. The mind is then merged in the unmanifested state. There is no consciousness of the ego or any object at that state. Hence it is meaningless to say that the non-dual Existence is known at the highest state of trance.

(7). Verbal testimony can be no independent source of the knowledge of Reality :—

Verbal testimony is sometimes spoken of as the source of the knowledge of the differenceless Existence. It is said that for the attainment of this knowledge we are first of all to hear (श्रवण) of this Reality, then to rationally reflect upon It (मनन) and then to deeply meditate upon It (निदिध्यासन) But in order to hear of the Reality, It must be conceived as an object of speech. Only objects of which some attributes or properties can be predicated can become objects of speech, and hence only related conditioned qualified objects can be spoken and heard. The attributeless unrelated unconditioned Existence cannot therefore be an object of speech and hearing. It may be argued that though direct speaking and hearing about the Reality is not possible, It may be spoken and heard with the help of indirect expressions. Even if this be admitted, whose testimony about the Reality can be relied on and accepted as the source of valid knowledge about It ? Those whose testimony have to be relied on must themselves have some valid source of knowledge of this Reality. If they also have to rely on other persons' testimony, then the fallacy of infinite regression would arise. If this is to be avoided, then at least some person or persons must have some independent source of valid knowledge of this Reality. These persons must acquire this knowledge either through per-

ception or through inference or through analogy or through implication or through occult perception or through trance-intuition. But all these have been shown to be incapable of giving any valid knowledge of the Reality, as It is conceived to be. Hence in the absence of any direct source of valid knowledge about the Reality, verbal testimony about It can not in any case be accepted as reliable. It cannot be said that persons can get this knowledge from God Himself, because this would involve the fallacy of *Petitio Principii*. The existence and nature of God being the point at issue, the reliableness of God cannot be unquestionably accepted as the basis of His existence. We have at last to fall back upon the reliableness of the Scriptures. But it has been already found that there is no valid ground for believing in the reliableness of the Scriptures as the independent source of the knowledge of the Reality.

Thus we fail to discover any independent source of the valid knowledge of the Reality, as It is conceived by the exponents of this theory.

(8) Non-apprehension cannot prove attributeless Reality.

As the above-mentioned proofs are not capable of knowing Reality, so its attributelessness cannot be known by the source of valid knowledge known as non-apprehension. Non-apprehension only refers to negation which is dependent on its counterentity. If theAbsolute Reality could have been known by means of any valid evidence, the non-apprehension of its attributes might somehow be regarded as an evidence for its attributelessness. But as there is the absence of any undeniable evidence for recognising the Absolute Reality, the question of the apprehension or non-apprehension of its attributes does not arise at all.

By the above discussion it is proved that by perception, inference, reliable testimony and the like which are acknowledged as means or instruments of correct knowledge, the existence of the attributeless non-dual consciousness, as conceived by the theory under examination, cannot be established.

Thus it is found that the attributeless Reality cannot be the object of any kind of valid knowledge (प्रमाण). We have now to examine if there is any possibility of establishing it by any form of logical reasoning (तर्क).

SECTION II

The Arguments for Absolute Reality Examined.

Now, let us examine the conception of Absolute Reality and the reasonings put forth to uphold it by the advocates of this theory. At first let us consider (1) their conception of Being or Existence as a universal substratum, then we shall examine (2) the conception of consciousness as the witness of the universe and afterwards we shall critically analyse the conceptions of (3) self-luminosity, (4) non-duality and (5) non-difference between Existence and consciousness.

(1)

The conception of Being Examined.

Now about Being or Existence. In order to prove that Existence is all-pervading, non-dual substratum of the universe, the advocate of the view has to rely either on the scriptures or on normal experience or on supernormal experience. It has already been proved that scriptures cannot be accepted as the final proof in any matter. It has also been shown and will be further shown in another connection that Samādhi-intuition cannot be a guarantee for the truth of any object. So the exponent of the view has to take his stand on normal experience and rational proof based upon it. But this also will not serve his purpose. He takes the ultimate Reality as without any attribute, and as such beyond the reach of the senses; accordingly it cannot be claimed that Existence as it is in itself, becomes the object of direct perception.

(a). The Doctrine of Existence as non-dual substratum represented.

It is argued that though Existence,—the pure attributeless formless Existence, which is the ultimate Reality—is not by itself an object of direct perception, the perception of this Existence is involved in every normal perception of objects. Whenever we experience any object, we experience it as existent. When we perceive a pot or a cot, we perceive that the pot is existent, the cot is existent, and this is true in every case of perception. Now, how can we interpret this experience ? Either it should be said that existence is the universal attribute of all objects of experience, or it should be said that existence is the universal genus of all objects, or the particular objects should be regarded as particular existences, there being no difference between the pot and its existence, the cot and its existence, etc., or Existence should be conceived as one absolute universal Substratum which appears in the diverse forms of the objects. The exponents of the doctrine of attributeless ultimate Reality point out that all the interpretations except the last are vitiated by various logical fallacies, and the only interpretation that can logically stand is the last. Hence they conclude that Pure attributeless formless Existence is the one absolute non-dual Substance or Reality, and all the particular substances with diverse forms, attributes and limitations, that become objects of our particular perceptions and appear along with the perception of Existence, are only qualifications and particularisations of this Absolute Existence. They also show that these qualifications and particularisations in the forms of particular objects do not really pertain to the essential nature of this universal Substratum, and hence the real nature of Existence is not qualified or particularised

or diversified by them. Thus they conclude that the pure attributeless formless changeless undifferentiated Existence, as the ultimate Reality, is proved by the analysis of our normal experience itself.

(b). The fallacies involved in this Doctrine.

Now, this interpretation of our normal experience appears to involve the fallacy of substantialising a logical abstraction. We always experience the pot as existent, the cot as existent, and so on; but never do we experience Existence as the pot, Existence as the cot, etc. The direct objects of our experience are the particular things, like the pot and the cot, having sensible forms and attributes, and the idea of existence goes along with them. There is no valid ground to hold that Existence, without any sensible forms and attributes, is the true object of perception, while the ideas of the pot, the cot and of the particular forms and attributes go along with the perception of Existence. In cases of dreams and the like also, the objects are perceived as existent for the time being, but when those states are gone and the normal state of consciousness returns, the existence of those objects is denied, though the fact of the perception and the forms and attributes of the perceived objects cannot be denied. It cannot be said that in those states also Existence was perceived in those forms and it proved to be non-existent afterwards. That would involve self-contradiction.

Further, even if in accordance with this interpretation Existence be regarded as the real Substance perceived in various qualified and particularised forms, what would be the ground for maintaining that Existence is essentially attributeless and formless ? If the theory has to take its stand on normal experience, it must be admitted that the Exist-

ence-Substance is invariably qualified by forms and attributes, though these may be varying. In that case the very nature of Existence should have to be conceived as modifying itself into various forms and the world of diverse objects should have to be regarded as the real self-manifestation of Existence. This would not be consistent with the attributelessness and changelessness of Existence.

In fact if we have to rely upon the analysis of normal experience for the knowledge of Existence, we can discover no reason for establishing that Existence is an independent substantial Reality. It is always found with and inseparable from the concrete objects of experience. The concept of existence can be separated from that of the objects only by conceptual abstraction. Such an abstract idea cannot be regarded as the absolute independent Reality, unless its non-dependence upon the concrete objects of experience and its transcendent self-existence can be proved by other irrefutable evidence.

(c) The sense-perception does not testify to the existence of an all-pervading Existence.

Further, when we perceive the particular objects as existent, how can it be proved that it is the same Existence which is perceived in and through the perception of all these objects? These particular perceptions can supply no proof of it, because we perceive the objects as different from one another. If it be said that existence being the common factor in all these perceptions, it must be conceived as one, the argument becomes too weak to establish the conclusion, because this fact may be explained by regarding existence either as a general attribute or as a general class. If it be argued that at the time of the perception of the cot we recognise the same Existence as we perceived at the time

of the perception of the pot, then we assert something beyond what is justified by actual experience. Such recognition is possible only in cases of particular objects of sense-perception. If Existence had been a particular object of experience qualified by particular characteristics distinguishing it from other particular objects, then only it could have been ascertained that it is the same individual object with the same distinctive characteristics that we perceived on the previous occasion. This is not possible in the case of what is regarded as an attributeless formless entity.

Further, Existence is regarded as the one absolute all-pervading Reality. If at the time of perceiving particular objects, this Existence had been perceived as a substance, it must have been experienced as the all-pervading entity. But this does not happen. Not only that, the sense-perception of all-pervading entity is itself impossible.

(d). Existence, if perceived as different from objects, would have distinguishing characteristics and would be many.

Besides, when it is asserted that with the perception of every particular existent object, like the pot, Existence also is perceived, it may be asked, is the particular object perceived as different from the Existence or non-different from it? If Existence and the particular object are perceived as different from each other, it cannot be maintained that Existence is the real substance and that it appears as qualified in the form of the particular object. Existence and the existent objects being in that case perceived as distinct realities, Existence also would have to be regarded as one of the objects of perception, limited by and differentiated from other objects, and this differentiation would imply the presence in it of certain distinguishing characte-

ristics. Consequently Existence would not then be attributeless. Further, it would not be established that the same Existence is perceived in the perception of every object. The Existence perceived along with the perception of the pot may be regarded as different from the existence perceived along with the existence of the cot. Hence there might be conceived innumerable existences in the world of sense-perception.

(e) The non-perception of distinguishing characteristics also does not prove absolute oneness of Existence.

It may be said that as there is no distinguishing attribute which can differentiate one existence perceived along with the perception of one particular object from another existence perceived along with the perception of a different particular object, Existence must be admitted to be one, though the particular objects in and through which it reveals itself to the faculty of perception are different. This however is not an adequate proof of the oneness of Existence. There may be a series of perceptions of a series of particular objects, all of them possessing the same characteristics. When we observe a flame blazing uniformly or a stream of water flowing continuously, we really perceive a different object at each succeeding moment, though there being no distinguishing attribute to differentiate the object of the perception of one moment from that of another, the object appears to be one. Hence the absence of any distinguishing attribute in the existences perceived with the perception of different objects can be no proof of the absolute oneness of Existence. If it is argued that in the cases of the perception of the objects of uniform character, like the

instances just cited, some attributes are present, which distinguish them from objects of different nature, but in the case of Existence, there is no attribute whatsoever, then in reply to this argument the possibility of the perception of Existence will be questioned. In the case of the absolute negation of all possible perceptible characteristics, perception can in no way be possible. Thus the absolute oneness of Existence perceived along with but differentiated from the perception of particular objects cannot be rationally established.

(f) Oneness of Existence would imply non-perception of different limited qualified objects.

Let us now consider the second alternative, which holds that in every perception, Existence and the particular object are perceived as non-different from each other. It may be asked, if Existence and the particular object are both objects of perception, how can it be maintained that they are non-different from each other ? It is the common experience that when two or more objects are perceived either simultaneously or successively, they are differentiated from one another. In case of non-difference two objects would not be perceived, but only one object would be perceived, though it may be given different names at pleasure. Hence if Existence and the particular object be really non-different, then existence would be merely another name for the particular object, or the particular object would be merely another name for existence. If it be admitted that existence is only another name for the particular object, then existence must be regarded as a limited qualified object and there should be different existences in case of different perceptions. If on the other hand we adhere to the oneness of existence and the particular objects perceived be

regarded as only different names for that one existence, then it would imply that we really do not perceive different limited qualified objects anywhere, but we perceive only one existence in every case. This would be a violent contradiction to what is actually experienced.

(g) Particular objects are not the illusory appearance of Existence because the conditions of illusion are absent.

Advocate—Our actual perceptions of different limited qualified objects are illusory. The one unlimited attributeless Existence is the universal Substratum of these illusory perceptions.

Critic—Then it cannot be said that we actually perceive the Existence along with the particular object, because it is by concealing the nature of the Substratum that illusions appear and they can be known as illusions only when with the perception of the Substratum they vanish. The Substratum as it is and the illusion about it cannot be perceived together. Hence if it is maintained that Existence and the particular object are perceived together, the particular object cannot be regarded as an illusory appearance of Existence. In order to be aware that the particular object is illusory, it is necessary that at the time of the perception of this object Existence is not perceived and that Existence becomes perceived in its true character apart from the particular object and proves the particular object which was previously perceived in its place to be false.

Advocate—The Substratum need not be wholly concealed for making room for illusory perception, but a partial concealment is sufficient for it.

Critic—Then it must be admitted that Existence has more than one aspect or attribute, so that in respect of one aspect or attribute at least it may be perceived along with the perception of the illusory object, the other aspects or attributes being concealed. This will be contradictory to the assumed nature of Existence. As Existence is conceived as the partless, aspectless, attributeless, differenceless Substance, it cannot consistently be regarded as partly veiled and partly unveiled, unperceived in some aspects and perceived in some other aspects. Hence the supposition of illusory perception of objects on the substratum of Existence cannot be consistently maintained.

Advocate—The partial concealment and partial manifestation of Existence in the illusory perception of particular objects may be supported on the ground that the perception of Existence as such is present in the perception of every object, but the infinity, absoluteness, consciousness and blissfulness, which pertain to the essential nature of Existence are veiled in this perception.

Critic—The question is, are they the different aspects or attributes of the Existence-Substance or do they together with Existence constitute the different aspects of another Substance, or does the very notion of the Existence-Substance involve the notions infinity, absoluteness etc. ? If they are regarded as different attributes or aspects of the Existence-substance, Existence cannot be called the one attributeless aspectless differenceless substance. It is then to be conceived as having several distinct aspects or attributes, some of which may appear at one time in isolation from the others. This would not be consistent with the conception of differenceless unity of Existence. Further, in that case the existence which is associated with the particular

objects in the perception of them must be admitted to be one of the aspects or attributes of that Existence-Substance, and cannot be regarded as that Existence-Substance itself ;—it should be existence of Existence, and not the same as Existence. Thus the contention of this school that Existence as the changeless substance is perceived in and through the perception of every object will not be substantiated. If existence as well as infinity, absoluteness etc., be regarded as the attributes or aspects of another Substance, then also the position of the advocates of the view will not be established, because the character of that Substance cannot then be ascertained on the strength of the perception of the attribute, viz, existence, in the perception of particular objects. If existence is an attribute, it may as well be an attribute of the particular objects as of that supposed Substance. There is no proof attainable on the basis of normal experience that existence is an attribute only and exclusively of an unknown Substance.

Lastly, if the very notion of Existence as such involves the notions of Infinity, absoluteness, consciousness and blissfulness, and these are not taken as different attributes of Existence, then the perception of Existence cannot be divorced from the perception of Infinity etc. In that case either Existence would not be perceived along with the perception of particular objects or every particular object would be perceived as infinite, absolute, conscious and blissful; that is to say, either there would be the perception of existenceless particular objects or there would be the perception of only one infinite absolute conscious Existence, and no particular object would be perceived.

Thus we find no logically consistent interpretation of our normal experience, by means of which it can be maintained that the perception of particular existent objects involves

the perception of one absolute differenceless attributeless Existence and that the particular objects are but illusory appearances on the substratum of Existence.

(h) Recognition of non-dual Existence through the sameness of perception not warrantable.

Some advocates of the doctrine of Absolute attributeless Existence try to prove the perception of the Existence-Substance in another way. They hold that when we perceive a particular object as existent, there are not two processes of perception, one of the object and another of existence, in which case the object and existence might be differentiated from each other. But in one single process of perception the object and the existence are perceived together. Being the objects of one undivided process of perception, the particular object and the existence must be accepted as non-different from each other. This does not of course mean that the particular object is the existence or the existence is the particular object or that the particular object and the existence are the two names for indicating the same reality. But both the particular object and Existence appear to the perceiving mind as non-different from each other, in the same way as the earthen pot and earth are perceived as non-different from each other because of their being the objects of the same process of perception.

But this argument for proving the non-difference of Existence and the particular object is not valid, because the sameness of the process of perception does not necessarily indicate the non-difference of its objects. This is evident in cases of the perception of an aggregate of particular objects. Take the case of perception of a forest

consisting of a large number of trees or of a class consisting of a large number of students. In such cases the particular trees or students are perceived by the same act of perception. On account of the unity of the act of perception, the idea of a unity, in the sense of an aggregate, arises in the mind, but the differences of the particular objects constituting the aggregate are not merged in the unity of the aggregate, and these objects cannot be regarded as non-different from one another. In the same way even if it be admitted that the existence and the particular object are perceived together by the same act of perception, we cannot be aware that the one is non-different from the other, but we can only know the unity in them in the sense of aggregate or togetherness. Thus we find that the perception of Existence as the one identical substance in and through the perception of the diversities of the particular objects can by no means be logically established. Hence the claim that one absolute attributeless differenceless Existence is the ultimate Reality and that it can be proved on the evidence of normal experience fails to substantiate itself.

(2)

The Conception of Consciousness as the changeless witness of all inner and outer facts of experience Examined.

Now about consciousness. The main argument on which the existence of one changeless attributeless consciousness behind the changing world of mind and matter is sought to be established is that remembrance cannot be explained without the recognition of an eternal consciousness as the witness of the subjective as well as the objective world. It is argued that witness-consciousness is the neces-

sary implication of remembrance,—the term 'necessary implication' meaning a postulate which must be taken for granted to account for the phenomenon of remembrance, but which cannot itself be substantiated by any other independent evidence. But necessary implication can be regarded as a proof of the existence of something, when that something involves no self-inconsistency or inconsistency with other established truths, and when it is the exclusive means of adequately accounting for the phenomenon in question and all other possible rival hypotheses are proved to be false or inadequate for the purpose. In the case in point, first it is to be established that by the recognition of witness-consciousness alone, remembrance can be explained. That the existence of a changeless attributeless differenceless consciousness as the ultimate Reality cannot be established by any valid independent means, i e. on the strength of the generally recognised sources of valid knowledge, has been already shown. Here we are to examine mainly the arguments by which the advocates of the view try to prove that without the recognition of such a consciousness as the changeless self-luminous witness behind all the mental states and functions, remembrance and other phenomena of the mind cannot be satisfactorily accounted for.

(a) Witness-consciousness cannot explain remembrance of waking, dream and sleep.

It is argued by the exponents of this view that the witness-consciousness must be taken for granted as the only possible ground of the explanation of the stages of waking, dream and dreamless sleep and the remembrance of them as belonging to the same individual.

But by logical examination of this position we find that a changeless neutral eternal consciousness cannot explain these states. Because the three states do not remain at the same time, they become recognised through the help of remembrance But this remembrance is not possible in eternal changeless consciousness. Remembrance requires that the previous experience should remain in the subtle condition in the consciousness and it should be revived and reproduced in it afterwards. Hence to account for the fact of remembrance of the states of waking, dream and sound sleep, the advocates of the view are required to admit that consciousness itself passes through these states and the impression of each state remains in a subtle condition in it. This implies that consciousness is to be admitted as subject to these modifications or changes of states. But this admission would involve the abandonment of the changeless eternal consciousness as the neutral witness of the states. Thus the witness-consciousness is not proved by these changing states.

Advocate—To explain these stages we also recognise the changing phenomenal consciousness (वृत्तिज्ञान) illumined by the changeless self-luminous eternal consciousness. These different stages are experienced and their impressions conserved and reproduced by this phenomenal consciousness, which accounts for the validity of remembrance. The eternal changeless consciousness, which illumines these states, their experiences, their impressions and their remembrance and in the absence of which they would not be manifested and unified, transcends this phenomenal consciousness and is not affected by the process of knowledge and change of states.

Critic—Here let us ask, whether through the production and destruction of each particular experience the subject

of the experience also becomes transformed or not. If it is said that the subject also becomes transformed, then again the question : Does the whole subject or only a part of it become transformed ? If the whole becomes transformed, then as with the destruction of the particular experienced state, its subject also is destroyed, it can not be existent at the time of remembrance, and therefore this remembrance cannot be explained by it. The whole subject being destroyed along with the destruction of its experienced state, it cannot be regarded as existing as the witness and rememberer of the destruction of that state. If it is said that only a part of the subject is transformed, then along with the disappearance of the state, that part of the subject, which experienced it, will also disappear, thus there will remain none to remember. Nor can it be said that the experience of the part will be remembered by the whole. If the whole is different from its part, then it cannot remember the experience of the part. In case they are different, there cannot be between them the relation of the part and the whole. If they are non-different, then the whole will be destroyed with the part, so it cannot be called the whole, nor can any subject remain to remember the experienced things. If it is asserted that through the rise and destruction of temporal states and their experiences, their subject is not affected, then it should not be recognised as modified phenomenal consciousness as distinct from the supposed unmodified eternal consciousness and those temporal states should not be reckoned as its modifications. Thus the recognition of mind-stuff or the phenomenal consciousness would be useless for the purpose of explaining remembrance, because either it is destroyed along with the destruction of the particular states and experiences, or being changeless and wholly untouched by those states and experiences it does not retain any ir˜pression of them and

cannot therefore reproduce them. Hence neither one changeless consciousness alone nor the phenomenal consciousness side by side with the eternal consciousness can explain the remembrance of the stages and experiences of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. Hence the existence of the eternal consciousness cannot be established on the ground that it is necessary to be postulated for explaining the fact of the remembrance of these different states of consciousness.

(b) The Doctrine of Consciousness as the witness of mental modifications Examined.

Another argument which is adduced to prove the existence of the witness-consciousness is that there must be one permanent changeless knower of all phenomenal cognitions which are modifications of the mind-stuff. As among the successive cognitions one cannot make another its object, there would be no unification of knowledge and remembrance of the past in the future in the absence of one unmodified permanent knower which illumines them all and to which they appear. It is further asserted that these phenomenal cognitions being the modifications of the mind-stuff are non-different from it and at the same time it is maintained that the mind-stuff, which is modified into those cognitions, remains as an abiding entity inspite of the production and destruction of these cognitions.

Now, this position is not logically tenable. If modifications and the modified are non-different, then owing to the abiding of the modified support, its modifications, viz. the particular cognitions, will also abide, and consequently there should be no appearance and disappearance of phenomenal knowledge. If there is one mind and if the modifications were non-different from it, then a variety of

knowledge could not take place, but there is the experience of the successive production and destruction of various cognitions. On the other hand if the mind and its modifications are regarded as non-different and the production and destruction of the cognitions are also admitted, then when a modification passes away, the mind should also disappear; that is to say, the mind-stuff would be destroyed. If the modified abides even after modifications have passed away, then the non-difference of the two will not be substantiated. So the modification of the mind and consequently the particular cognitions cannot be logically explained on the supposition of the non-difference of modifications and the modified. If to evade this difficulty, it is supposed that they are different, then there would be no ground for regarding the phenomenal cognitions as the modifications of the mind, because the cognitions would be as good as other objects appearing externally to the mind and the mind would remain merely as an unmodified witness. In that case the witness-consciousness need not be recognised for the explanation of those temporal cognitions. Further, in that case there should remain no distinction between the internal and the external objects of experience, and the relation between the mind and the objects of knowledge also could not be established. Thus knowledge cannot be explained by regarding the particular cognitions either as non-different from the mind or as different from it. Hence the relation between the mind and the particular phenomenal cognitions must be regarded as inexplicable in terms of difference and non-difference.

Even granting mind and its modifications, consciousness cannot be proved as their unmodified knower (witness) by being related or proximate.

Moreover, admitting that the particular cognitions are the modifications of the mind and that this mind as a modi-

fying entity retains its identity in and through the transitory cognitions that are produced and destroyed, how can the neutral presence of one changeless consciousness account for these modifications of the mind and the remembrance of them ? To answer this question the relation between the mind and this consciousness has to be ascertained. If the consciousness be regarded as the actual knower of the particular modifications of the mind, then these modifications must be conceived as the objects of the knowledge of that consciousness. In that case with the production and destruction of the particular modifications of the mind in the shape of transitory cognitions of particular objects, there should be changes in the consciousness itself. The knowledge of the particular cognitions, the retention of them in memory and the reproduction of them at the time of recollection should all be in that case the functions of this consciousness. Such consciousness cannot be regarded as the eternal changeless consciousness. If it be said that all these functions are the functions of the mind, then the mind should be regarded as itself the knower of its own modifications and capable of retaining and reproducing them ; in that case the recognition of the transcendent consciousness becomes superfluous. If it be argued that the mind being not self-illumining, the presence of the transcendent consciousness is necessary to illumine and reveal its modifications, then the question should arise, does this self-illumining consciousness illumine and reveal these mental modifications by being related to the mind or by remaining unrelated to it. If it is related to the mind, it cannot remain untouched and unaffected by its modification and therefore cannot be said to be eternally changeless and attributeless. Further, it may be asked, is this relation eternal or temporary ? If the relation is eternal, the mind

should always be illuminated, and in that case all its past modifications should be equally illuminated and always remain as shining objects of its knowledge along with the present modifications. There would then be no room for forgetfulness or deep sleep or any unconscious state of the mind. If on the other hand the relation be regarded as produced, the temporary presence and absence of relation has to be accounted for and some cause for producing and breaking the relation has to be discovered. If any such cause be admitted, the relation between that cause with consciousness on the one side and mind on the other has to be ascertained, and similar difficulties will arise. Moreover, the production and cessation of relation with the mind and its modification cannot but affect the consciousness and rob it of its changeless character.

If it be said that there is really no relation between the consciousness and the mind, then it is unintelligible how the mind and its modifications can be illuminated by the consciousness with which it has no relation. If on account of the mere presence of the consciousness in the proximity of the mind, the mind is said to imbibe the character of the consciousness, then there is no reason why owing to the same proximity the consciousness should not imbibe the character of the mind and admit of modifications. Here again the question would arise whether the proximity is eternal or occasional, and we should be faced by the same difficulties as mentioned above. Then again it will be asked, what is the nature of this proximity ? Does it mean any spatial nearness ? In that case both the consciousness and the mind should have to be regarded as occupying space, but this is a property of material objects of sense-perception. Does it mean temporal proximity ? In that case

they should be reduced to events in time. How otherwise can we form an idea of the nature of proximity ?

The arguments in favour of witness-consciousness and their refutation : The supposition of the inexplicable relation between mind and witness-consciousness is no solution.

Being unable to define and establish any real relation or real proximity between the changeless consciousness and the modifying mind, the exponents of this theory argue that the consciousness is not the real knower of the mind and its modifications in the sense in which we generally understand the term, that it does not pass through any actual process of knowledge with the successive mental modifications as the objects and does not therefore undergo any change or modification ; nor does the mind become a really conscious entity by imbibing the character of the consciousness. The mind passes through various kinds of modifications : the particular cognitions, their retention in memory, their reproduction at the time of recollection, are the modifications of the mind, and the mind preserves its identity in and through all these modifications. But consciousness cannot be a property of such a changing being as the mind. The mind and its modifications must therefore appear to and be illumined by a changeless consciousness in order that they may reveal themselves and function according to their own nature. The relation or the proximity of the consciousness and the mind is admittedly indefinable in terms of logical categories. But still some indefinable inexplicable relation must be postulated in order to explain the possibility of the mental modifications viz. the manifestation of the particular cognitions, their retention and reproduction. The relation being inexplicable in logical

terms may be said to be an 'apparent relation'. On account of this apparent relation, the mind appears to become a permanent self-conscious Ego with its own modifications as the objects, and the consciousness also appears to undergo modifications and to be influenced by the diversities and the impurities of the mind. But in truth, the consciousness remains eternally untouched by these modifications, diversities and impurities, because without the recognition of such a transcendent nature of the consciousness, these facts cannot be explained.

Now, in reply to this sort of arguments the critics may retort that if for the purpose of furnishing a logical explanation to the facts of actual experience one is required to have recourse to some principle which is itself logically indefinable, inexplicable and unjustifiable, it is more logical and more sincere to admit that these facts themselves are incapable of being logically accounted for. We have shown in the earlier part of this discussion as well as on previous occasions how difficult it is to maintain logically that any substance like the mind modifies itself into diverse particular forms and at the same time preserves its identity unimpaired throughout all these changes. In the present case it is necessary to show that it is not only possible for the mind to retain its identity amidst all these modifications, but also that it is possible for it to make those modifications the objects of its knowledge, to conserve the impressions of the past modifications within its bosom while the present modifications are going on, to rouse these impressions and reproduce them in the forms of fresh modifications on any future occasions, to link together all these modifications and to experience them as belonging to the same ego, and so on. The changeless neutral consciousness, which is supposed to throw light on these

functions of the mind to make them appear on the scene, does not throw any light on the problem as to how all these functions are possible for the same mind. If the consciousness is allowed to intervene in supplying grounds for these functions, it can no longer be regarded as neutral, functionless and changeless. Now, if all these functions of the mind are accepted unquestionably on the ground of general experience, what is the harm in regarding this mind as endowed with the property of consciousness as well on the same ground of general experience? If it be said that various insoluble logical difficulties arise from such a supposition, the answer would be that the supposition of a changeless functionless self-luminous consciousness also does not solve the logical difficulties and that the supposition of an inexplicable relation between the mind and the consciousness, an illusory appearance of the Ego-hood of the mind due to this inexplicable relation, a neither-real-nor-unreal ignorance as the cause of this relation, and so on and so forth, is virtually an admission of the insolubleness of the logical difficulties.

The detailed examination of the doctrine of apparent or illusory relation as well as of the absolute unity of the changeless consciousness in this kind of relation to all individual minds will be given in another connection. For the present from the above discussion we find that the existence of the changeless witness-consciousness cannot be established logically on the ground that it must be admitted as the permanent knower of the mental modifications.

(c) Witness-consciousness cannot be admitted as the explanation of stream-cognition.

Another argument to prove the witness-consciousness is that it is necessary to admit it for explaining what is

known as the stream-cognition (धाराज्ञान). It is held that when I remember a case of a continuous series of cognitions having the same particular thing as their object, I remember three distinct entities inseparably inter-related, viz. the ego as the subject of these cognitions, the particular thing as the object, and the series of cognitions forming a continuous stream. If these three are not knowd by one knower, which remains un-modified throughout, this remembrance cannot be accounted for. Since one cognition cannot be the cogniser of another cognition, the knowledge of the continuity of the series would be impossible without the witness. That it is the same object which is cognised in all these cognitions would also not be known and the unity ot the ego also would not be experienced without it. But this also is not an invincible argument to prove the changeless consciousness, because the remembrance referred to here cannot be logically explained by the recognition of the eternal unchanging neutral witness-consciousness. If this consciousness is, as it is conceived, absolutely unconcerned with the particular cognitions and their object and the factors related together in the said remembrance, it cannot be regarded as their knower or rememberer and can be of no help in accounting for this knowledge and remembrance; and if on the other hand it makes them its objects of knowledge and remembrance, it should be regarded as itself modified and altered, and should, according to their own process of reasoning, presuppose another knower and so on *ad infinitum*. Nor the recognition of a phenomenal consciousness can be of any help in avoiding the difficulty, because either this changing phenomenal consciousness with its objects should be the object of this transcendent changeless consciousness, in which case the same objections will again arise, or it should be the object of another pheno-

menal consciousness, and that again of another, and so on, in which case there will be an infinite regression.

Witness-consciousness as the explanation of the ignorance about all things other than the object of stream-cognition cannot be accepted.

There is another argument to prove the necessity of recognising the existence of a changeless self-illumining consciousness. After the continuous flow of knowledge of any particular object, when we look back upon that state of the mind, we remember that we did not so long know anything else. This means that we have the remembrance of the ignorance about all things other than the particular object of that stream-cognition. If this ignorance had not been experienced at the time of the said continuous knowledge, it could not have been the object of recollection afterwards. This ignorance must therefore be regarded as having been experienced. But it cannot be the object of experience to the mind, because then the mind would be modified into the form of ignorance and the said knowledge would in that case be impossible. The mind cannot be modified into knowledge and ignorance at the same time. Further, it is not possible for the mind to know its own ignorance, because knowledge and ignorance contradict each other. Hence to explain the fact of the remembrance of the ignorance, this ignorance must be regarded as the object of the eternal changeless transcendent consciousness. Knowledge and ignorance are both illumined by this self-luminous consciousness, and afterwards as knowledge is revived in memory, so ignorance also is revived in memory. Hence the transcendent consciousness must be recognised to account for the remembrance of ignorance.

Now, this way of establishing the changeless consciousness as the transcendent knower of ignorance is also not satisfactory, because it cannot supply any logically sufficient and consistent explanation for the fact referred to. What is the nature of this ignorance ? Is it a positive entity or merely the absence of knowledge with regard to any object ? If it be regarded as a positive entity, what is its relation to the mind on the one hand and the consciousness on the other ? If ignorance be regarded as existing side by side with the mind, then as the cognitions about particular object are conceived as modifications of the mind-stuff, so the particular cases of ignorance with regard to particular objects must also be conceived as modifications of this ignorance-stuff. Now, if these particular modifications of ignorance be the objects of the knowledge of the transcendent consciousness, then all the difficulties, mentioned before, associated with the conception of the particular modifications of the mind as the objects of that consciousness, should unanswerably be present in this case as well. Further, if ignorance be a positive entity, how can it take as its objects all the things of the universe save and except the particular object of the particular stream-cognition of the time ? In our experience we recollect that we were ignorant of all other things of the world; how can this recollection be explained by means of this theory ? Moreover, supposing that the transcendent consciousness experiences the particular modification of ignorance in the form of the ignorance of all other objects, it may be asked, when this particular modification disappears, where should the impression left by it be conserved in order that it may be an object of recollection afterwards ? If it be said that it is retained in the consciousness, then the consciousness, being not merely the knower or illuminator of the modifi-

cation of ignorance, but also the recipient of its impression and the retainer and reproducer of it, cannot be regarded as unaffected by it. If, on the other hand, the impression of the modification is conserved in the ignorance itself, then the recollection also, instead of being in the form of knowledge, ought to be in the form of ignorance, that is to say, there should in that case be no recollection at all.

Remembrance is a form of knowledge and as such it should be regarded as a modification of the faculty of knowledge and not of the faculty of ignorance. If a particular ignorance, i. e. an ignorance of particular objects, be a modification of the faculty of ignorance as distinct from the faculty of knowledge, how can it be revived as a modification of the faculty of knowledge, i. e. of the mind. The experience of one cannot be the object of remembrance to another that has not experienced it. It may be said that the ignorance and the mind are so related that the modification of the ignorance may appear in a different form as the modification of the mind. But what can be the character of that relation? The answer may be that the transcendent consciousness being the knower or illuminator of both establishes the relation between the two. But the question is, are the ignorance and the mind illumined by the consciousness on account of any real relation between them and this consciousness? We have already found that various logical difficulties arise, when we try to form a definite conception of the relation between the mind and the consciousness. Similar difficulties are sure to arise if we try to form a definite conception of the relation between the transcendent consciousness and the positive modifying faculty of ignorance. Even if it be agreed that the consciousness, though remaining neutral and unaffected by the modifications of

the ignorance and the mind, can illumine them, how can it explain the reappearance of a modification of the ignorance in the form of a modification of the mind ?

Advocate.—The consciousness, when illumining the modification of the ignorance, becomes illusorily identified with it and through this illusory identification it becomes the knower of this modification. Through similar illusory identification the mind,—the faculty of knowledge—is also illumined by the consciousness. Hence the mind and the ignorance, being both identified with the consciousness, become related together, and the impression of the modification of the ignorance is transmitted to the mind and revived there in the form of recollection.

Critic.—The difficulties of recognising a relation of illusory identification have been discussed elsewhere. It is virtually an admission that the problem is insoluble. Further, admitting this illusory identification, do the knowledge and the ignorance become identified with the consciousness at the same time or at different times ? If at different times, then the knowledge of one thing and the ignorance of other things cannot occur at the same time, and the recollection that at the time of knowing this I was ignorant of other things would be falsified. If they occur at the same time, do the knowledge and the ignorance retain their distinct characteristics at the time of this identification or not ? If they do not, the actual knowledge of something and ignorance of other things would not be possible. If they remain different at the time of the identification with the same Reality, it is difficult to explain why these two mutually antagonistic faculties should not negate or destroy each other. As they do not actually destroy each other, it must be admitted

that in spite of their identification with the same consciousness, they are not mutually related. Consequently it remains unexplained how the impression of the modification of the ignorance can be transmitted to the faculty of knowledge and reproduced there in the form of its modification as recollection. As the last resort, it should be said that the consciousness really experiences this modification of the ignorance and retains its impression in a subtle state and then infuses it into the faculty of knowledge. In that case the consciousness would not be a neutral inactive changeless consciousness as it is conceived to be, but would be reduced to a phenomenal consciousness admitting of activities and changes of states.

Thus we find that if the ignorance be conceived as a positive entity distinct from and independent of the mind or the faculty of knowledge, the remembrance of any particular ignorance cannot be accounted for even by an appeal to the supposed transcendent consciousness. If by abandoning this position, a causal relation be admitted between the mind and the ignorance, or knowledge and ignorance be regarded as states or experiences of the same self-conscious self-modifying permanent ego, the recognition of the transcendent consciousness becomes superfluous for the purpose in view. Into the logical difficulties of these alternative suppositions, we need not enter here, because we are at present concerned only with the examination of the reasoning for the establishment of the transcendent consciousness.

So far we have discussed whether the necessity of recognising the existence of the transcendent changeless consciousness can be proved to account for the recollection of any particular ignorance, on the assumption that ignorance

is a positive entity like *knowledge*. Let us now consider the position which would arise by the acceptance of the other alternative, viz., that the ignorance remembered in this case is merely the absence of the knowledge about those objects. If it be held that the absence of the knowledge of other objects at the time of the continued knowledge of any particular object is the object of recollection afterwards, then it must also be assumed that this absence of the knowledge of other objects was an object of experience at that time. If it had not been experienced, it could not be remembered and reproduced afterwards. Hence the question is, whether the absence of knowledge can be an object of experience at all. If for the sake of the possibility of remembrance, it is held that it can be an object of experience, then, it should be asked, by what can it be experienced? This should lead to the question, what is the nature of this ignorance, considered as the absence of knowledge? Knowledge is regarded as a particular modification of the mind. Accordingly, this negative ignorance can be conceived as the absence of that modification. Now, where can this absence of knowledge reside and to what object can it be related? Suppose, a pot is the object of knowledge. The absence of this knowledge must also refer to the pot as its object and it can reside in the mind, not at the time when the pot is known, but at other times. As after the stream-cognition of a pot we remember that we had been ignorant of all other things, the possibility of the absence of the knowledge of all other things must therefore imply the presence of the knowledge of all other things at the time of the recollection or at least at some other time. But the knowledge of all other things can never be present to the mind, i. e. the mind can never modify itself into the knowledge of all other things. Consequently the absence of this knowlege also cannot reside in the mind, and there-

fore there is no possibility of its being the object of remembrance. It may be said that the absence of the knowledge of all other things does not presuppose the actual knowledge of all other things; the remembrance referred to merely implies that nothing but the pot was then the object of knowledge, i. e. there was the absence of the knowledge of *non-pot*. Then the question would be, was *non-pot* at any time the object of actual knowledge ? Evidently it was not. The knowledge of non-pot itself follows from the knowledge of the pot. The absence of the knowledge of non-pot cannot therefore be an object of remembrance, but only of inference. Further, even if it be accepted that the knowledge of the non-pot is possible, and therefore its absence also can be recognised, then it must be admitted that the experience of the absence of the knowledge of the non-pot must at the same time involve the memory of the knowledge of the non-pot. In that case to account for the recollection in question, it must be admitted that along with the continuous flow of the knowledge of the pot there is the recollection of the previous knowledge of the non-pot or all things other than the pot, as well as the experience of the absence of this knowledge at that time. This is evidently impossible, because the knowledge of the pot cannot proceed continuously, if it is intervened by the said recollection and the said experience. Thus we find that the experience of the absence of the knowledge of all other things at the time of the stream-cognition and its recollection afterwards cannot be consistently established. Hence this can be of no use in proving the transcendent consciousness.

Advocate.—The continued knowledge of the pot and the absence of the knowledge of all things other than the pot are both experienced and illumined by the transcendent

consciousness. Since the experience of the transcendent consciousness is altogether of a different character from the knowledge arising out of the modification of the mind and does not involve any process or modification, there is no incompatibleness between this experience and the said continued knowledge in the mind, and hence remembrance also can be accounted for.

Critic.—This position also can not be logically established. When a particular modification of the mind is illumined by the supposed transcendent consciousness, it becomes a phenomenal experience, and it can be retained in memory and revived in recollection. But when there is no modification of the mind, the said transcendent consciousness has nothing to illumine, it exists in its own eternal self-luminous character and produces no phenomenal experience. If without the modification of the mind, it could produce any actual phenomenal experience, then the entire world would always be the object of our phenomenal knowledge. Hence the question is, does the absence of the knowledge of all things other than the pot mean the absence of the modification of the mind into any form other than into the form of the knowledge of the pot, or does it imply another form of the modification of the mind ? If it implies the absence of modification, it cannot be illumined by the transcendent consciousness into any actual experience capable of being retained in memory and reproduced into the form of a recollection. If it be regarded as some form of the modification of the mind, then the modifications of the mind into the form of the knowledge of the pot and into the form of the absence of the knowledge of other things must go on either simultaneously or successively. They cannot go on simultaneously, because the mind cannot be modified into the form of knowledge and the form of

the negation of knowledge at the same time. If they go on successively, the continuity of the flow of knowledge cannot remain unbroken. Hence it is found that the transcendent consciousness cannot furnish any logically tenable explanation for the remembrance of the ignorance taken in the sense of the absence of knowledge.

Thus whether ignorance is taken in the sense of a positive entity or in the sense of the mere absence of knowledge, in no case can the fact of the remembrance of the ignorance of other objects associated with the continued knowledge of any particular object can be adequately and consistently accounted for by the supposition of one transcendent consciousness as the changeless self-luminous knower.

(d) Witness as the knower of the cause-effect-relation between any two mental modifications cannot be proved.

Another argument to prove the necessity of the witness-consciousness is that the cause-effect-relation that subsists between any two mental modifications (such as the knowledge of dancing and joy) cannot be known, unless these mental modifications and the invariable sequence between them are experienced by such a consciousness as transcends all these mental modifications and remains changeless in and through these changes. But the knowledge of this causal relation can not be logically proved to be attainable even by admitting this changeless consciousness, which being immutable in nature cannot be the actual knower of such a relation.

By analysis of the knowledge of the cause-effect-relation between two entities, we find that it involves a knowledge of the cause, a knowledge of the effect and a

knowledge of the immediate invariable succession between them. Now, when the cause and the effect are both mental modifications, the transcendent consciousness, which is supposed to be their knower, must not only experience them, but also compare them and establish the relation of succession between them. As the effect follows the cause, at the time of the experience of the effect, the cause is not the object of direct experience, and at the time of the establishment of the causal relation between the two, both may be events of the past. Hence it is the idea of the preceding mental modification that has to be compared to the idea of the succeeding mental modification, and the relation of invariable succession between them is to be established. Now, if it is the supposed transcendent consciousness that is to be regarded as the source of the knowledge of this causal relation, then this consciousness has to be conceived as not only capable of knowing the mental modifications as they occur, but also of forming, retaining and reproducing ideas about them and comparing them with one another. This would imply that the consciousness is capable of modifying itself into the forms of those ideas and at the same time making those modifications the objects of its experience, and it would also imply its active function of comparing those ideas and establishing relation between them. But the recognition of all such capacities and functions and of the self-modifications with self-identity of the transcendent consciousness would mean the abandonment of its eternally changeless functionless attributeless neutral character. If it be said that the consciousness only illumines through its eternal self-luminous character the particular modifications of the mind as they present themselves to it and through that illumination they become apparently identified with it and objects of its experience, then the relation of succession

between any two mental modifications,—not to speak of their invariable succession—can in no way be the object of its experience, because this relation is not a mental modification. Further, how can the time-sequence be an object of experience to the consciousness, which has no relation to the temporal phenomena? Being a changeless immutable self-luminous entity, it should always be of the nature of the experience of Eternity, i. e. sequenceless Time. The consciousness of the sequence in time would imply a modification of the consciousness in accordance with the changes in time. Thus it is found that the knowledge of the cause-effect-relation between the mental modifications cannot be consistently explained by reference to the absolutely changeless self-luminous consciousness.

Further, even admitting that the said consciousness, though immutable, can experience the mental modifications, in order to know the cause-effect-relation, it must know the destruction (negation) of the cause, viz. the previous mental modification and the prior negation of the effect, viz. the succeeding modification. But these cannot be known by the witness. According to them, the mental modifications are apprehended by the witness; but can they consistently maintain that their negation or absence also is apprehended by it? When they hold that the negation of knowledge in the pot and other material things is apprehended not by the witness, but by the source of valid knowledge called non-apprehension, they should for the sake of consistency admit that the negation of knowledge is everywhere to be apprehended through the same source.

Advocate.—Whatever is known by anyone, its negation also must be known by the same. Hence we admit that both knowledge and its negation are known by the witness.

Critic.—Consistently with your admission, you cannot cite this rule. In the case of the knowledge of the absence of the pot on the ground, the operation of sense-organs, you say, is exhausted in knowing the ground, but the absence of the pot there is known by a new source of valid knowledge viz. non-apprehension which has no other operation besides giving this knowledge. Hence though the pot is known by sense-organs, the negation of the pot is not known by sense-organs. Thus, you yourself violate your own rule.

Thus it is shown that negation of knowledge should be known by non-apprehension and cannot be known by the witness whose function it is not to know negation. Besides, when you say that knowledge is directly known by the witness, you must admit that knowledge is present because, according to you, only that which is present can directly be known by the witness. So when the knowledge is present, its negation will not be found. That is, if either of these two, namely knowledge and its negation, exists, the other will not exist. When negation is not present, its identity with the witness-consciousness is not possible. Consequently it cannot be directly apprehended by the witness whose direct apprehension, according to you, is nothing but the identity of the object with it. Moreover, the perception of negation is always qualified in character, in as much as it requires the knowledge of the substratum of negation and the remembrance of its counter-entity; but the witness is taken as devoid of all qualifications, so it cannot have the perception of negation. Besides, negation is known by a source of valid knowledge called non-apprehension; therefore it cannot be supposed that negation will be known by a consciousness (the witness) which is be-

yond all sources of valid knowledge. Thus it is found that the witness-consciousness cannot be proved as the knower of the cause-effect-relation between any two mental modifications.

(e) Witness-consciousness cannot be proved as the illuminator of extramental objects with the attribute of unknownness.

There is another argument to establish the changeless self-luminous witness-consciousness. When I experience an extramental object, this knowledge of the thing is attended with the knowledge that the thing existed independently of my knowledge from beforehand, but it was unknown to me. This implies that the thing had, before my knowledge of it, the property of unknownness, which was destroyed by the property of knownness, which was produced in it when it became the object of my experience. Now, this property of unknownness cannot be regarded as pertaining to the nature of the thing, for in that case it could not have been destroyed by my knowledge and my knowledge of the thing also would have been impossible. This property, therefore, must be regarded as owing to my ignorance of the thing. Since this ignorance could neither be a modification of my mind nor a self-existent and self-revealing reality, it must be a positive entity distinguished from my mind and owing its existence and revelation to a transcendent self-existent and self-luminous consciousness. Again, as this ignorance is the material cause of the property of unknownness of an object external to me, and as it is an admitted principle that the material cause must exist in the place where its effect is experienced, it must be accepted that this ignorance also has an existence outside of myself. From this it follows

as a matter of course that the consciousness by which this ignorance is sustained and revealed must also be present outside of myself. Now, since all the external objects of my experience must have the property of unknownness prior to my knowledge of them, the existence of ignorance must be admitted everywhere in the objective world and consequently the consciousness also must be recognised to be immanent everywhere as the sustainer and revealer of this ignorance.

Further, since the consciousness is the sustainer and revealer not only of ignorance, but also of knowledge, the properties of unknownness and knownness of things should both be regarded as ultimately due to the presence of this consciousness. As the known and the unknown things constitute the entire universe, the transcendent consciousness must be conceived as all-pervading.

Let us now examine this argument. The argument is principally based on the recognition of the property of unknownness in the things. Here the question that immediately strikes us is, whether this property of unknownness is *objectively* present in a thing independently of its relation to any particular subject, or it appears to be only *subjectively* present in it in relation to some particular subject. If it is taken in the latter sense, then the property is there only in relation to the particular person concerned and not in the thing apart from its relation to him, and so long as the relation between the particular person and the thing is not established, the property cannot be conceived to be existent in the thing. Hence there would be no meaning in holding that the property of unknownness had been really present in the thing before I knew it and that it was destroyed by my knowledge of it. Further, if the

thing had really the property of unknownness before my knowledge of it, I could never have known this property; because when this property was present, I had no knowledge of the thing and therefore no knowledge of its property, and when I know the thing, the property of unknownness is not there. Since my knowledge of the thing and its unknownness are contradictory, they can never meet. Thus, as the presence of the positive property of unknownness in the thing in relation to me before my knowledge of it cannot be logically proved, the admission of the presence of positive ignorance as the material cause of this property is unnecessary, and its existence is unprovable. Hence the existence of the transcendent consciousness also as the sustainer and revealer of this ignorance cannot be established. Moreover, if such a property of unknownness is admitted, then in relation to every individual that does not know it, a separate property of unknownness has to be supposed, and the thing instead of having one unknownness, should have innumerable unknownnesses. In that case there should be innumerable ignorances also as the material causes of these unknownnesses. Hence the consciousness which is recognised as the sustainer and revealer of the ignorance giving rise to the property of unknownness in relation to me cannot be proved to be the same as in relation to others. In my own case also there should be the admission of different ignorances for originating unknownnesses in diverse objects. If such different ignorances in connection with different individuals as well as different objects be not admitted, the knowledge of one thing by one person ought to destroy the ignorance of all persons with regard to all things, and hence nothing should remain unknown to anybody. Thus we fail to explain with logical consistency the phenomenon of our acquisition of new knowledge of things by means of the theory that

there is a subjective property of unknownness in things, which is produced by ignorance sustained by the transcendent consciousness and which is destroyed by our knowledge of them.

Let us now consider the logical position of the theory that unknownness is an objective property of the things, arising from the objective ignorance sustained and revealed by the all-pervading transcendent consciousness. Here two questions have to be answered first, viz. whether unknownness and knownness are contradictory to each other, and whether unknownness is one or many. With regard to the first question, if they are not contradictory, then even after a thing becomes known to a person, it should remain unknown to him, because though as a result of his knowledge the property of knownness is produced in the object, the property of unknownness will not disappear. That is to say, the same thing should be known and unknown to the same person at the same time. This is obviously impossible. If they are contradictory, then as soon as any individual acquires knowledge of a thing, the property of knownness is produced in it, and the property of unknownness in it is destroyed. The objective property of unknownness being destroyed, the thing ought to appear as known to everybody. But this does not happen. It may be argued that though the property of unknownness is objective, the knowledge of the thing is dependent upon contact between the thing and the sense-organs of a particular person or the mental modification of a particular person into the form of the thing. When this knowledge becomes the destroyer of the unknownness of the thing, it does not absolutely destroy it and hence does not make it known to everybody. The knowledge being relative to a particular individual, the property of unknownness disappears only in relation to

him and not in relation to others. Now, according to this interpretation of the doctrine, the knowledge is subjective, though the property of unknownness in the thing and the ignorance which produces it are objective. Here the question is, does the knowledge of the thing acquired by a particular person (whatever may be the means of acquiring it) produce the property of knownness in the object ? If it does, how can this property of knownness be manifested in the object without destroying its property of unknownness ? How can the property of knownness appear in the thing even in relation to a single person in the presence of the objective unknownness in the same thing ? In that case two contradictory properties, viz. knownness and unknownness, should have to be conceived as equally characterising the same object, and this is against the fundamental principle of thought. Moreover, if knowledge is regarded as a property of the individual person, it may be asked, how can it produce the property of knownness in the object of knowledge ? The advocates of the view under consideration infer the presence of objective ignorance from the presence of objective unknownness in the external object on the ground that the material cause must be present in the same region where the effect appears. By parity of reasoning knowledge also which is the cause of the property of knownness in the object, ought to be conceived as having objective existence. In that case knowledge and ignorance should both have objective existence and neither should negate the other, consequently their effects viz. knownness and unknownness, should also be always the properties of every object ; as a result everything should always be known and unknown to everybody. The absurdity of such a position is beyond question.

It may be said that knownness is not an objective property of the thing, and hence the objective existence of

its cause, viz. knowledge need not be admitted ; but as the unknownness is not the product of any effort or any mental modification of any person, while its denial would be the denial of a fact of experience, its objective existence has to be admitted. In reply to this, we have to ask, what is the fact of experience that compels us to admit the objective existence of the property of unknownness in the external object ? The fact is that I know the object anew, it was existent before my knowledge and I did not know it so long. How my want of knowledge of an existent thing can compel me to admit the presence of a positive property of unknownness in the thing itself is not easily intelligible to common-sense. It can at most lead to the admission of the presence of ignorance somehow related to me, which stood in the way of my knowledge being extended to the object or which acted as a veil over my mind and obstructed its view of the object. If my knowing an object does not entitle me to infer the objective existence of knownness in the thing, my not knowing the thing also cannot entitle me to infer the objective existence of unknownness in the thing. If from my knowledge of the object I am not justified in inferring the existence of an external knowledge unrelated to any particular knowing person, then from the experience of my ignorance of the object also I am not justified in inferring the objective existence of an external ignorance unrelated to any particular person. Hence the appeal to the necessary implication of my experience of the previous absence of knowledge of particular existent objects cannot establish the objective property of unknownness in the object and the objective existence of ignorance as the cause of it.

Further, it is the generally accepted principle that two contradictory qualities cannot be present together in the

same thing at the same time. Accordingly the knowledge and the ignorance of the same thing cannot exist in me at the same time. The knowledge of a thing, when produced in me, can and must destroy the ignorance, which previously existed in me, with regard to the same thing. But if ignorance be regarded as having an objective existence independent of me and if that ignorance be regarded as the cause of the property of unknownness in the object, how can the knowledge arising in me destroy that external ignorance and remove that external unknownness ?

If we admit that the property of unknownness is actually produced in the object itself by a positive ignorance sustained and revealed by a transcendent consciousness, the second question which arises is, whether this unknownness is one or many. If it be one, then the disappearance of this property should also be regarded as one occurrence, produced once for all, by whatsoever cause it may be produced, and if this property of unknownness be the reason for the object not being known, its disappearance ought to make the object universally known. If it be argued that the actual knowledge of a thing by a particular person is conditional upon other co-operating causes, such as sense-contact, mind-modification, etc., then the question would be, whether the presence and absence of these so-called co-operating causes alone can or cannot adequately account for the presence and absence respectively of the knowledge of the thing. If they can, the supposition of the presence of one positive ignorance producing one positive property of unknownness in the object would be against the Law of Parsimony. Even accepting the position of the advocate that they cannot, let us take any one case in which, all the conditions for producing true knowledge of the thing are fulfilled ; should we not then admit that the ignorance

which veiled the object or produced the property of unknownness in the object is destroyed? If the ignorance and the property of unknownness it produced be regarded as destroyed by the requisite knowledge even in this one case, how can they again be objectively present in connection with that particular thing? Or are we to suppose that inspite of their destruction, it does not become known to others on account of the absence of the co-operating causes? We are thus placed between the horns of an unpleasant dilemma;—either we have to suppose that inspite of the presence of the ignorance and the unknownness pertaining to a thing a person can know it through the help of the co-operating causes, or we are to suppose that inspite of the absence of the ignorance and the unknownness other persons cannot know it owing to the absence of those causes. Thus we fail to account for the knowledge and the want of knowledge with regard to a single particular thing by reference to the theory of one objective property of unknownness originating from one positive ignorance. It need not be mentioned how infinitely more difficult and absurd the position would be, if one positive ignorance, contradictory to and destructible by phenomenal knowledge, be regarded as veiling all objects unknown to particular persons and originating the one property of unknownness in them all.

If to avoid these difficulties, many unknownnesses are admitted, then also there would be no logical ground to stand upon. It would apparently be consistent with our actual experience, because every individual person knows many things and does not know many other things, and every individual object is known to some persons and unknown to many other persons. But the logical corollary from the theory would be that every particular thing should

be regarded as possessing an indefinite number of unknownnesses and knownnesses at the same time. With the increase of the number of persons knowing it, the number of unknownnesses should decrease and the number of knownnesses should increase. However awkward the supposition may appear to be, let us for argument's sake concede it. But how can the numerous unknownnesses be distinguished from one another? If there be no mark of distinction, they should be identical and consequently reduced to one; and in that case the aforesaid difficulties should reappear. If they are to be distinguishable, each property of unknownness must be particularised. But how can a property of unknownness be particularised, except by its relation to the particular person not knowing it? Accordingly, to form a conception of the innumerable particular properties of unknownnesses pertaining to any particular thing, it must be related to all persons of the past, the present and the future, who had not, have not and will not have any occasion to come in contact with it or otherwise to have any knowledge of it. This implies that we should have to suppose actual relations among all possible objects of knowledge and all possible knowing beings in the universe. The supposition is evidently irrational.

Then the question would arise, whether one ignorance should be supposed to be the cause of all these unknownnesses or different ignorances should have to be imagined to account for different unknownnesses. It is evident that without the destruction of the ignorance that produces and sustains the property of unknownness in a thing, the property of unknownness cannot be destroyed, and that unless the property of unknownness is destroyed, the knowledge of the thing cannot be established. Accordingly, the knowledge of a thing implies the destruction of the ignorance that

is at the root of its knownness. Now, if there be one single ignorance as the cause of the unknownness of all things in the world, then the knowledge of any particular thing by any particular person would involve the destruction of that ignorance. If this ignorance disappears, there would be nothing to sustain the unknownness of other things; hence the property of unknownness would have to disappear from all things, even though they are not actually known. In that case there would be no necessary relation between the property of unknownness and its being or not being known. This is a conclusion which the advocates of the view can never admit, because in that case the very necessity of recognizing the property of unknownness and the ignorance as its cause would disappear.

If on the other hand a particular ignorance is supposed as the cause of each particular unknownness of every particular thing, there would be innumerable positive ignorances to account for the phenomena of knowing and not-knowing. Here again, in order to mark out the ignorances from one another, each must be conceived as particularised by a relation between a particular thing and a particular mind that can possibly know it. If an ignorance is thus conditioned by the relation between a thing and a mind, this ignorance must presuppose the relation, since that which is conditioned presupposes that by which it is conditioned. This would involve the supposition that every thing is related to every mind, irrespective of all temporal and spatial distances. Even if for the sake of the theory we are prepared to make such a supposition, how can such innumerable relations of innumerable actual and possible objects with innumerable actual and possible minds be defined and accounted for? None of the categories, in terms of which the relations are logically

defined can be applicable here, and no verifiable explanation can be supplied for the establishment of these relations. However, if such relations are admitted, then the conclusion should be that ignorance is the name for a particular type of relation between a mind and an object, and knowledge is the name for another particular type of relation between a mind and an object, and that these two types of relation are such that between the same mind and the same object one cannot appear without destroying the other. But this conclusion is not consistent with the view under consideration. If ignorance be regarded as a particular type of relation between a mind and an object, it cannot be conceived as a positive entity existing independently of the minds and producing the property of unknownness in the objects.

We have thus found numerous logical difficulties in the supposition that unknownness is a property of the things experienced as having been previously unknown and that ignorance is a positive entity which produces this property in those things. Now, the exponents of this theory hold that there is the changeless self-luminous transcendent consciousness which is the sustainer and illuminator of this ignorance. As a result of our foregoing discussion we may here say that as the positive property of unknownness in the things and the positive ignorance as the cause of it could not be logically established, the argument that the changeless transcendent consciousness is necessarily implied by them and is therefore to be accepted as necessarily real, becomes automatically groundless. Besides, on a previous occasion we have found that the transcendent consciousness cannot furnish an adequate explanation for the phenomenon of ignorance. Here the difficulty is increased by supposing the external objective existence of ignorance along

with the object unknown. It may be asked in this connection, whether the witness-consciousness which illumines the knowledge is the same as the consciousness which sustains and reveals the objective ignorance. The advocates of the theory cannot of course admit that they are different, because that would mean the recognition of innumerable self-luminous consciousnesses. Even if they had accepted this position, the relations among these consciousnesses could by no means be established. But the oneness of the consciousness illumining the internal knowledge and that illumining the external ignorance is a conclusion which has to be proved, and cannot be accepted without proof.

The only proof that can be accepted from the logical point of view is that it is the only adequate means of accounting for the phenomena of normal experience. Here we are concerned with the question whether the recognition of one transcendent consciousness is necessary for and capable of adequately explaining the phenomena relating to knowledge and ignorance of things. It is maintained by the exponents of this view that knowledge which consists of the modification of the mind into the forms of things and ignorance which is a positive entity apart from the mind and which produces the property of unknownness in things are both sustained and illumined by the one consciousness. It is also maintained that knowledge and ignorance are both identfied with this consciousness and it is through this identification that they are revealed and they perform their respective functions. Further, the knowledge and the ignorance are regarded as antagonistic to each other.

Now, when a knowledge is revealed and is thus identified with consciousness, it is difficult to understand

how its antagonist, viz. ignorance, can also remain identified with it. If it can, then the ignorance relating to the thing which becomes the object of knowledge should not disappear with the appearance of this knowledge. If it cannot, then when one knowledge appears, all ignorance ought to disappear. But this does not happen. How then can the one consciousness explain the knowledge about one object appearing at the same time with the ignorance about other objects. If to avoid this difficulty the one consciousness be conceived as particularised by its relation to particular minds and to the external objects, then further difficulties would arise. It would not be capable of supplying any reasonable explanation of our acquaintance even with the supposed property of unknownness in the objects. The witness-consciousness is particularised by its relation to the mind, while the property of unknownness is in the outside thing and the ignorance which is its cause is also in that external region; so neither the unknownness nor the ignorance is related to this witness. Hence according to this view, there cannot be the perception such as 'I do not know the pot'. To explain : The individual ignorance (तूलाविद्या), which is seated in the consciousness particularised by the thing, cannot be experienced as in touch with the knower particularised by the mind. It may be supposed that there is ignorance in the consciousness particularised by the mind ; so ignorance is not distant from the said consciousness. But this is not true. The individual ignorance related to the consciousness particularised by the thing cannot be said to be the same as or non-different from the root-ignorance (मूलाविद्या) which is in relation to the consciousness particularised by the mind. It cannot be said that by its mere relation with consciousness, the unknownness of the pot may be the object of perception, because in that case there will be an unwarrantable stretch and in that

case there should have been the perception of the unknownness of the thing even long before its normal knowledge; but this is not experienced. Nor can it be said that by the mental cognition which eliminates the unknownness of the thing, this property of unknownness in it will be revealed, because the former has no relation with the latter. Thus, it is shown that in no way can the alleged illumination by the witness-consciousness explain our acquaintance with the unknownness of the object. If you say that there is a 'simple relation' (the 'Swarupa'-relation) between the seer and the seen, the consciousness and the object, then it can be pointed out that the illogical character of the simple relation (oneself cannot be one's own, etc.) has already been shown. Moreover, if the alleged simple relation be a relation, then in the case of the attribute and the substance and the like, it will be the relation; hence the recognition of the relation of identity will be to no purpose. Besides, you cannot determine exactly what the nature of the object of consciousness is. Taking it for granted that there is a simple relation between the seer and the seen, it may be observed that as not merely the particular object concerned but all objects are so related to the seer, all of them will be equally the object of consciousness; and thus there would be no meaning in the specification of the pot, the cot etc. as its objects. The result of such a view would be that all particular usage would be removed and every object would be confused with everyother in daily practice resulting from such knowledge. If you say that the capability (योग्यता) of being the object of consciousness is the peculiar property of the pot, and as such the pot and not the cot becomes the specific object of consciousness, then the question is : how will that capability be the object of cognition ? Plainly it follows that in that case, the first capability will be known through a second capability, and the second through a third.

the third through a fourth, and so on *ad infinitum*. Thus it is found that for the knowledge of a single object, an infinite number of capabilities has to be known. But infinite capabilities necessary for the cognition of a single object cannot be known in their particulars; so they become unestablished. From a general knowledge of those capabilities alone, the nature of the object cannot be established. Thus, you cannot determine the nature of the object of consciousness and so it is meaningless on your part to speak of unknownness as the object of consciousness. In short, your assertion namely the unknownness of an object becomes revealed by the witness-consciousness is not logically tenable.

(3)

Self-luminosity of Consciousness Examined.

(A) The Doctrine of self-luminosity Explained.

Let us now consider the doctrine that consciousness is self-luminous, that self-luminosity constitutes the very nature of consciousness and is therefore absolutely inseparable from it, and that nothing other than consciousness is or can possibly be self-luminous. It is argued by the exponents of this doctrine that every concrete knowledge involves two elements, viz. an object illumined and that which illumines it. If the object itself had been self-luminous, it would have shone by its own light without being the object of knowledge. In that case its objectivity would disappear. Its very nature as an object means that its existence and character are revealed by the subject, to which it appears. The subject as the revealer should therefore be regarded as the self-luminous entity. It is further pointed out that the objects may be of various kinds and each object may be changing, but the knowledge of these

varieties and changes is possible only on the ground that they are all revealed in their relations to and by one self-luminous subject. This is true not only with regard to the external objects, but also true with regard to the mental processes, functions and modifications, in the waking as well as in the dream state. These also, being objects of knowledge, are non-self-luminous and also reveal themselves by being illumined by one self-luminous subject. It is further argued that this self-luminosity, being the essential character of the consciousness, which is the changeless subject in relation to all objects, never forsakes it. Even in the states of sound sleep, swoon or trance, the self-luminosity of consciousness remains unaffected and consciousness does not become unconscious in these states, though objective knowledge is absent. It is further maintained by the advocates of the theory, that this consciousness is not only identical in the same person throughout all changes of knowledge, all mental modifications and all vicissitudes of life, but it is also identical in all persons of all ages and all places. Thus it is sought to be established that one and only one absolute consciousness is alone the self-luminous entity in the universe.

(B) Criticism :

(a) Subjectivity does not necessarily mean Self-luminosity.

Now, let us examine first of all whether the above analysis of knowledge is sound and whether the conclusion sought to be established from it stands on a sure logical foundation. In every knowledge there is the experience that "I know the object." The experience of 'I' as the subject, the thing or change or relation as the object, and the connection between the subject and the object, invariably

appears at the same time and in the same cognition. It is only by reflection and abstraction that we separate them from one another. As the object is revealed only in relation to the subject, so the subject also is experienced only in relation to the object. As we never experience the existence and character of the object independently of the subject, so the existence and character of the subject or 'I' also is never experienced except in reference to some object, whether material or mental. Hence it may be legitimately contended that the subject of knowledge owes its self-revelation as much to the object as the latter does to the former. How can then it be unquestionably established that the subject alone is self-luminous and that the object is devoid of self-luminosity and shines by the light of the subject ?

Then again, it is not an established truth that the objectivity of any entity lies in its being non-self-luminous. It is quite conceivable that the same entity may have self-luminosity as its attribute, and that this may be known to itself or to another subject. There are many thinkers who maintain that self-luminous entities may be objects of knowledge. There is no unassailable ground for holding that self-luminosity as an attribute cannot itself be an object of thought and cognition.

(b). Self-luminous consciousness cannot be an object of knowledge.

But if with the advocates of the view in question we assume that an object of knowledge is necessarily non-self-luminous and that a self-luminous entity can never be an object of knowledge, then we are automatically led to the position that there is no means of knowing the

self-luminous subject or consciousness. Consciousness with its essential attribute of self-luminosity can be established as a real entity, only if there is any valid means of knowing it as such. Now, consistently with the position to which the exponents of this theory have led us, if there is any valid means of knowing the consciousness, it becomes an object of knowledge and must therefore be non-self-luminous, and on the other hand, if there is no means of knowing it, its self-luminosity cannot be established. Accordingly, the existence of consciousness as the self-luminous subject of knowledge is far from being proved on the strength of the nature of knowledge.

(c) Self-luminosity not proved by perception.

Moreover, if the exponents of this doctrine argue that though the self-luminous consciousness is not of the nature of the object of knowledge in general, there are some valid ways of knowing it, their inconsistency becomes palpable from the following considerations. There cannot be any perception of its self-luminosity, because according to universal admittance perception is possible only of the objects of sense-perception.

(d) Self-luminosity not proved by Inference.

Nor by inference can it be proved. Inference is produced through the knowledge of positive and negative concomitance. In order to infer through positive concomitance it should be observed somewhere. But this is not possible in the present case, because no instance of any self-luminous object can be found anywhere in the world of our experience, there being nothing else except consciousness, which is admitted by them to be self-luminous. There

is no example of the identity of the subject and the object. The light cannot be cited as an example of alleged self-luminosity. The light is known by a person through the eyes, and it cannot be regarded as the subject. Thus, light is merely an object of knowledge and not both the subject as well as the object. Now, about negative concomitance. The expression of negative concomitance must involve reference to the absence of what is to be proved (साध्याभाव). This method of inference could be applied, if we could find instances in which in the absence of self-luminosity there is the absence of the same thing being both the subject and the object. But this observation of the absence of something along with the absence of something else becomes meaningless and can lead to no conclusion, unless it is preceded by the observation of their concomitance in presence. The negative concomitance is resorted to only to strengthen or confirm the conclusion suggested by the observation of positive concomitance. In the absence of the knowledge of positive concomitance, the knowledge of negative concomitance cannot be of any use. But in the case under discussion, no relation of positive concomitance between self-luminosity and the same thing being subject as well as object of knowledge is anywhere observed in our experience ; so the question of the negative concomitance demanded by the alleged inference cannot arise here at all.

(e) Self-luminosity not proved by "Arthāpatti".

The only mode of establishing the self-luminosity of consciousness, which the advocates of this view can fall back upon, is what is known as *Arthāpatti* (implication), which means here that, without assuming the existence of some self-luminous consciousness, the illuminations of the non-self-luminous mental and material objects, cannot be

logically accounted for. But it may be mentioned that other schools of philosophy have also attempted to account for the processes of knowledge—the illuminations of objects,—and many of them have not resorted to the assumption of any such changeless self-luminous consciousness to attain their end. This shows that we find a plurality of rival hypotheses to account for the same class of phenomena. That this is the only hypothesis, which alone can furnish the most adequate explanation for them is not satisfactorily established. That this hypothesis also suffers from logical defects we have shown in connection with the examination of the witness-theory and are also going to show here. Besides, in our ordinary argumentations, whenever we accept *arthāpatti* as an evidence in any particular case, the existence of that which is legitimately supposed for furnishing the explanation sought for, is or has to be proved on independent grounds, and the relation of concomitance between that which is supposed to explain and that which is to be explained must also be known or has to be established by some other valid means. That some person must be taking his meals secretly at night can be accepted as a valid hypothesis for accounting for the strength and robustness of his physique from the observation of his not taking his meals at the day-time, only when the fact of meals being taken by men and the dependence of the strength and robustness upon it are known from other sources of valid knowledge. Otherwise the hypothesis suggested on the ground of *arthāpatti* cannot by itself be accepted as the sufficient evidence for the existence of that agency and for the invariable causal relation between it and the phenomenon it is to explain. In the case under consideration, the very existence of the self-luminous consciousness and the necessary relation between such an unchangeable self-luminous entity and the phenomena of

knowledge are questionable and are not known from any other independent source of knowledge. The hypothesis must have reference to *vera causa*—a real cause,—i. e. a cause the reality of which can be independently known. It cannot by itself furnish an adequate evidence for the reality of the agent it supposes. Hence on the strength of *arthápatti* or valid hypothesis we cannot be sure of the existence of the self-luminous consciousness. So long as a satisfactory independent evidence of the existence of such an entity is not available, it must be regarded as a happy conjecture, but not a logical proof.

(f) Self-luminosity not proved by the Scriptures.

In the absence of the possibility of valid perception and inference, the advocates of this doctrine may fall back upon the scriptures for furnishing this independent evidence ; but the weakness of this evidence we have pointed out on numerous occasions. Thus we fail to obtain an adequate proof of the existence of the self-luminous changeless consciousness behind our knowledge.

(g) Self-luminosity of Consciousness in dreamless sleep, swoon and trance not proved.

Further, it is held that self-luminosity is ever-present with consciousness, and it is not absent even at the time of sound sleep, swoon, trance etc. But what is the proof of this assumption ? Is consciousness then conscious of itself ? It would in that case be subject and object of knowledge at the same time. Consequently, in accordance with the fundamental assumption of the exponents of this theory, it would be self-luminous and non-self-luminous at the same time. This is obviously absurd. Further, in the waking state, we retain no memory of our self-consciousness.

of the preceding states of sound sleep etc. Again, at the times of sound sleep, swoon etc., the body, the mind, the external objects are all present; why is not the self-luminosity of consciousness reflected on them in these states? Why are not they illumined by and revealed to consciousness? If it be argued that on account of the absence of mental modifications, the self-luminous consciousness cannot reveal them to itself nor can it reveal itself to itself, then it follows logically that the actual luminosity of consciousness is dependent upon the mental modifications in its presence and in touch with it. In that case it may be legitimately held by the opponents of this view that the luminosity does not pertain to the essential character of consciousness, but that it is the product of the mutual relation or the action and reaction between the consciousness and the mind. Hence the self-luminosity of consciousness is not proved to the satisfaction of the requirements of logic.

(4)

The non-duality of consciousness based on self-luminosity Refuted.

Now, the exponents of this theory not only maintain that there is a permanent self-luminous consciousness in every knowing person; but they further hold that there is one and only one self-luminous consciousness in the universe, that the knowing subject in all the apparently innumerable knowing beings is one without a second. They argue that one self-luminous consciousness cannot possibly be an object of the knowledge of another self-luminous consciousness, for this would contradict the very nature of self-luminosity. If there had been a plurality of such consciousness, each would have a distinct objective universe

of its own, and there would be absolutely no relation among these consciousnesses and among these universes. So far as one universe is concerned,—and this is what we can conceive—there must be only one self-luminous subject, by which all the diverse objects and events within it are illumined and manifested.

It is evident from their arguments in support of this doctrine of the non-duality of the self-luminous consciousness, that they rely for the validity of this doctrine chiefly upon the validity of their conception of the necessarily self-luminous character of the subject and the necessarily non-self-luminous character of all objects. But we have found in the foregoing discussion that this conception of the subject and the object does not itself stand on a sure logical foundation. How then can the corollaries that are drawn from it claim acceptance from men of logical thought? In course of our examination of the theory of one non-dual universal witness-consciousness, we have pointed out the logical and psychological difficulties which arise from the supposition of one such consciousness as the knower in all cases of knowledge and in all knowing individuals. We need not repeat them here. That the non-duality of the self-luminous consciousness lacks logical proof is evident from what we have already said.

(5)

The doctrine of the Identity of Existence and Consciousness Examined.

The school of thought we are discussing here has arrived at a conclusion of great philosophical importance from its unique conception of Existence and consciousness. By analysis of and reflection upon the nature of the existent

objects of the universe, these thinkers conclude that there is one infinite and eternal, changeless and attributeless, absolute Existence, which is the sole substratum of the numberless finite and transitory, relative and contingent existences, that constitute the universe. On the other hand, by analysis of and reflection upon the nature of knowledge, and the possibility of the illumination, revelation, manifestation or appearance of those existences as objects of experience and thought, they are led to the conclusion that there must be one infinite and eternal, changeless and attributeless, self-luminous knowing consciousness, which is the sole Subject, illumining and manifesting all objects. Thus the Existence is found to be the absolute ground of the phenomenal existence of all things and the Consciousness is found to be the absolute ground of the manifestation of all things,—the Existence is the sole supporter and the Consciousness is the sole revealer of the entire universe of thought and existence. Now, the question arises, what is the relation between the Existence and the Consciousness? The exponents of the view in question assert they are not two Realities, but one and identical. If they had been different, if the ground of existence and the ground of manifestation had been two distinct Realities, there could not obviously be any connection between them. That is to say, the existent objects would remain eternally unmanifested and the manifested objects would remain eternally non-existent, and this is obviously an absurd position. Or else, we would have to recognise a unifying Principle above both the Existence and the Consciousness to bring about the connection between them and to get rid of the absurd position. But such recognition would lead us to another impossible position, for in that case the unifying Principle, being above Existence and Consciousness, would have to be

conceived as itself non-existent and non-self-luminous. Hence the Existence and the Consciousness must be conceived as the same identical Reality. The ultimate source of all being and all knowing is the same,—to exist and to be manifested, to be and to be known, must have the same ultimate Ground. This means that the Substratum of the world of diversities is the infinite and eternal, self-existent and self-luminous consciousness.

Now, let us examine the strength of this doctrine. We have previously examined the doctrine of one absolute Existence as the Substratum of all the diverse objects of the world, and we have found that there are various logical difficulties, which the doctrine cannot satisfactorily meet. We have also examined the doctrine that one universal Consciousness is the sole subject of all knowledge, the sole unchanging witness to which all objects appear, the sole self-luminous subject by the light of which all objects are manifested. The examination has shown that the existence of such a universal Consciousness is far from being logically established and even by the supposition of such a Consciousness the problems with regard to knowledge and the manifestation of the innumerable subjects and objects of the phenomenal world are not solved with logical adequacy and consistency.

Now, as the truths of the Existence and the Consciousness as supplying the ultimate explanations for the phenomena of existence and knowledge are found to be not logically established, the question of the identity or difference of them loses much of its philosophical importance. But even assuming that the Existence and the Consciousness have been separately obtained as the ultimate grounds of explanation for the existence and the knowledge of

objects, we find that the attempt at the establishment of their identity has not been quite successful. To point out the absurdities that would arise out of regarding them as two independent Realities is not enough for proving their identity, and this is particularly so in the present case, because the Existence and the Consciousness, as conceived by the advocates of the theory do not themselves stand on a secure logical foundation and are not recognised as such by other schools of thought. It may be contended by these latter that if the two ultimate conceptions arrived at by different ways of approach as a result of reflection upon two different orders of phenomena, viz. those of existence and those of knowledge, are finally found to be irreconcilable and as such contradicting each other, both of them may be abandoned and fresh attempts may be made from new stand-points to solve the problems in question.

The Three Ways to establish Identity between Existence and Consciousness Examined.

Existence and Consciousness are, to common understanding, two different conceptions. In order to establish the identity of the two, either it has to be proved that in their ultimate analysis the two conceptions are really identical,—that they are only two modes of conceiving and expressing the same Reality,—or one of them is to be resolved into and deduced from the other, or one of them is to be shown to be the attribute of the other. The first of these alternatives does not seem to be possible. Both the notion of Existence and the notion of Consciousness are admittedly elementary notions, and neither of them admits of further analysis. If they are treated as complex notions, admitting of further analysis, the whole structure of the doctrine under examination will be demolished. In

their analysis of the objective world as well as of the phenomenon of knowledge through which it finds manifestation, the exponents of this doctrine have gone to the furthest possible limit in accordance with their view-point and stopped at the conceptions of Existence and Consciousness owing to the impossibility of advancing further in this direction. Hence any attempt to prove their identity by deeper analysis would involve self-contradiction. Nor can it be maintained that they are two modes of conceiving and expressing the same Reality. Existence refers to being, and consciousness refers to knowing; Existence is that which is, and consciousness is that which knows; Existence is Substance, and Consciousness is Subject. Being and knowing cannot be regarded as the same phenomenon. That which is does not by itself mean that which knows. The fact that Something exists does not necessarily imply that it knows. Existence and Consciousness may both be characterised by infinity and eternity, unconditionalness and all-pervadingness, changelessness and attributelessness, simplicity and undividedness; but that would not imply that they are identical. The conception of Existence does not involve the notion of self-luminosity and knowingness. If the conception of consciousness be regarded as involving the notion of Existence, then either this existence has to be conceived as an attribute of consciousness, or this consciousness has to be conceived as a particularised expression of Existence, and both these alternatives would be unpalatable to the advocates of this doctrine. Thus the identity of the two notions cannot be established.

The second alternative also cannot be resorted to by the supporters of this view. The notion of Existence cannot, according to them, be resolved into and derived from that of Consciousness, nor can the latter be resolved into and

derived from the former. If Existence, as conceived by them, could by itself furnish an adequate logical explanation for the phenomenon of knowledge and the revelation of things as objects of knowledge, if without reference to the presence of a self-luminous consciousness as the witness or Subject, the illumination of the objective world could be accounted for by reference to Existence alone, then only could Consciousness be reduced into and derived from Existence, i. e. it could be regarded as a particular form of the self-expression of Existence. Then the position would be that Existence, which is in its ultimate character unconscious, (or you may call it supra-conscious, if you please) somehow manifests itself as the conscious subject and the unconscious objective world. Consciousness, in that case, would not be the ultimate Reality ; it would then have only a derivative reality. Further, consciousness would then have to be conceived as derived from the unconscious. All such corollaries that should follow from the attempt at deriving consciousness from Existence would be inadmissible to the supporters of this doctrine. On the other hand it is evidently absurd to try to derive Existence from Consciousness. If Existence is to be regarded as derived from consciousness, consciousness must have to be conceived as non-existent, and we have to suppose that it is from the non-existent consciousness, that Existence is produced. Further, the existent objective world has to be conceived as being illumined and exhibited by and manifested and revealed to a non-existent self-luminous consciousness. Nothing can be more absurd than such conclusions, which inevitably follow from the conception of Existence as derived from consciousness. The exponents of this doctrine also do not of course adopt this absurd method to prove the identity of Existence and consciousness.

The third alternative remains. Either Existence may be regarded as the attribute of Consciousness, or Consciousness may be regarded as the attribute of Existence. This also is not consistent with the view under consideration, because it does not conceive either Existence or Consciousness as an attribute, but both as attributeless substance. Existence being the Substratum of the world of objective realities cannot be regarded as an attribute of anything, and Consciousness being the self-luminous witness and the ground of the manifestation of all objects, mental and extra-mental, cannot be consistently conceived as the attribute of any other Reality. Therefore the identity of the two cannot be attained by this process. Moreover, if Consciousness be a necessary attribute of Existence, and if this conscious Existence be inherent as the substratum of all objects, all objects ought to be self-illumining, shining and revealing themselves by the inner light of the attribute of consciousness inherent in their own substratum. Everything ought then to be conscious, and there should be no distinction between conscious and unconscious beings in the world. Knowledge and being should then be identical everywhere in the universe. The same difficulties would arise if Existence be taken as the attribute of Consciousness. Even if these difficulties are somehow overcome, the purpose of this school of thought would not be served. If one of them be regarded as the attribute of the other, it is the relation of Identity (तादात्म्य) that is established, but not their absolute oneness, and hence the differenceless attributeless non-duality of the ground of the existence and revelation of the world of diversities is not proved.

SECTION III.

THEORY OF CAUSATION EXAMINED

Introduction

The protagonists of the view under examination having proved Existence as non-dual substratum of the universe have, as we have noted before, attempted to establish its identity with consciousness. This consciousness they conceive as the universal self-luminous witness, without recognising which the manifestation of the universe cannot, according to them, be accounted for. After having proved the identity of Existence and consciousness they prove this ultimate Reality as the one unchanging material cause of the world. Afterwards by analysis of causation they find out that this causation is of the nature of illusory appearance and that there is another inexplicable principle as the modifying material cause of this illusion.

In our examination we have shown that the nature of Existence and Consciousness as well as their identity, as upheld by the advocates of the theory, is not tenable. Thereby their claim to have found out the ultimate changeless and attributeless material cause of the universe is also repudiated. Here we prove that their theory of causation is defective.

The Doctrine of the advocate Described : the effect has non-different existence from the cause and has unreal difference from the same: cause has higher order of reality and effect has a lower order.

They admit that there is difference as well as non-difference between the material cause and the effect. But

they also assert that the difference and the non-difference between the same two objects cannot be of the same order of reality.

They differentiate between three orders of reality, viz. absolute, phenomenal and apparent. By absolute reality they mean that which is eternally true and can never be either proved to be false under any condition or changed into any other reality. This is the highest order of reality, in comparison with which every other reality is of a lower order. By phenomenal reality they mean that which is true so far as our normal experience goes, which is established to be true by sense-observation and inference, but which is proved to be unreal by the knowledge of the absolute reality. In normal experience it is found to be subject to production, change and dissolution, and in transcendental experience it is found to be an expression or appearance of the absolute reality. By apparent reality they mean that which appears to be true under some special subjective conditions, but which is proved to be unreal when those conditions disappear. It is the appearance of phenomenal reality as something else to some individual mind under some circumstances, and when the knowledge of that phenomenal reality in its true nature is attained, this appearance vanishes. Of these three orders of reality, the apparent reality is regarded as illusory appearance or fiction of our imagination, in comparison with the order of phenomenal realities, and in our ordinary discourse the latter is spoken of as real and the former as unreal. Consequently, when there is an apparent reality by the side of a phenomenal reality, we cannot speak of them as two realities, because the one is not real in the same sense as the other, and even if the former is found to be contrary or contradictory to the latter, the latter is not really contradicted.

but the former is spoken of as illusory or imaginary or unreal. Again from the stand-point of the absolute reality all phenomenal realities also appear as illusory or unsubstantial appearances. Hence if the absolute reality is one, it does not become really many owing to the presence of numerous phenomenal realities, which are its appearances. The nature of the absolute reality is not in any way modified or influenced by these phenomenal realities, because these are as good as non-existent to it.

Now, having analysed the relation between an effect and its material cause, as we normally experience it, these philosophers point out that the effect necessarily participates in the nature of the cause, but is at the same time distinguished from it, for otherwise the cause-effect-relation would not be established. The earthen pot is substantially the same as the cause, earth, but it is also distinguished from it in respect of its special features. If the pot be not identical in essence with earth, it cannot be called its effect, and on the other hand if it be altogether identical with it and has no point of difference, then also the pot would be earth itself, and not its effect. Accordingly the effect must be regarded as identical with and at the same time different from its cause. But if identity and difference be taken as belonging to the same order of reality, they would logically contradict each other. Hence the identity and the difference between the effect and its material cause have to be so conceived that the one may not contradict the other. Havaing criticised all possible alternative conceptions with regard to the relation, they come to the conclusion that the only way in which · e can logically conceive it is that the identity belongs to a higher order of reality because the substance remains the same, and the difference to a lower order, because the difference-

lies only in name and form. Thus in the relation between the pot and earth, the identity between them is essential and the difference non-essential, the identity phonemenal, the difference apparent, the identity real and the difference unreal. Accordingly from the stand-point of the higher phenomenal order of reality, the earth has not become anything other than itself, the substance has not really undergone any change, it has remained identical with itself what is called the pot is substantially identical with and not different from the earth. On the other hand, from the standpoint of the lower apparent order of reality, the pot is something different from the earth,—the effect, being taken along with its specific distinguishing features—its name and form—is distinguished from its material cause. This apparent distinction—the distinction in name and form—does not contradict the substantial and real identity, but only apparently serves as a limitation of it.

The exponents of the view warn us against regarding this relative unreality as total absence or negation of existence like that of the hare's horn or the castle in the air. The apparent reality has a positive existence; but the way in which it is perceived or conceived from the lower standpoint is invalidated, when viewed from the higher point of view. Thus the distinction between the effect and its cause is not to be regarded as altogether absent, this distinction positively exists; but the identity has a higher order of existence and from that point of view the distinction loses its importance and is regarded as non-essential and apparent.

Arguing in this way the exponents of this view assert that in every case of causal relation, the cause is the real essence of the effect, and the effect is an apparent form of

manifestation of the cause,—that the effect is really non-different from the cause and apparently different from it. This theory of causation is the corner-stone of the system of philosophy, which, on the strength of this theory, seeks to establish that one transcendent absolute Existence-Consciousness, which is essentially changeless, actionless, differenceless and attributeless is the material cause of the changing world of diversities, which is, quite consistently with this view of causation, regarded as essentially non-different from It and only apparently differentiated from It.

Critical Examination.

(a) Logical Explanation for Causal Relation not ascertainable.

Now, let us examine this view of causation. So far as the primary analysis of the relation between cause and effect is concerned, we can readily accept it. In all such cases of causal relation, e. g., in the case of the relation between the pot and earth, we actually experience the identity of substance as well as the difference of features and attributes. But when in the logical attempt to reconcile the identity and the difference, the advocates of the view take recourse to their theory of different orders of reality, we must join issue with them. The identity and the difference are both matters of actual normal experience. What justification is there to assert that the difference belongs to a lower order of reality and the identity to a higher order ? Does the effect disappear or turn out to be false with the appearance of the knowledge of the cause ? Of course not. If it be argued that there is no other means of reconciling these two contradictory notions

of difference and non-difference, then in the absence of any incontrovertible justification for introducing the notions of different orders of reality, it ought to be frankly admitted that it is not possible to furnish an adequate logical explanation for the causal relation or to reduce the causal relation into simpler relations.

(b) Conditions of lower and higher orders of reality unfulfilled.

The first question that we would put to them is, what is the source of the recognition of such higher and lower orders of reality and what is their real significance? Evidently this source is psychological. We experience certain facts at certain times and form certain ideas about them. Afterwards as a result of closer observation, we become convinced that the real nature of the facts are not as we experienced them previously and the ideas we formed about them do not represent their true character. Thus our present knowledge of the facts invalidates the past knowledge. The facts as we experience them now are then regarded as real, and in comparison with these facts, those of the past experience are regarded as unreal. Since they also had been objects of experience, they cannot be said to have been absolutely non-existent, and since that experience is now invalidated, they cannot be said to have been really existent; hence such objects of invalidated experience are said to be apparently existent, and having a lower order of reality. The cases like those of the experience of a snake and a rope with reference to the same object may be cited as examples. Sometimes our perception of a thing may be invalidated by valid inference; and though on account of the inherent imperfection of our power of perception, we may not get rid of this invalidated percep-

tion, still the nature of the thing as we know it by such inference is regarded as representing its real nature, while in comparison with it, the nature of the thing as we perceive it is regarded as unreal or having a lower order of reality. The case of the Sun or the Moon, as we perceive it and as we know it by scientific inference may be cited as an example. We need not multiply instances. Whenever with reference to the same thing or the same class of things, our previous knowledge is invalidated by other knowledge based on stronger evidence, we are led to draw the distinction between reality and unreality or between the reality of a higher order and a reality of a lower order. It is thus as a result of the two kinds of subjective experience or knowledge with reference to the same objective entity, that our conception of the different orders of reality, higher and lower, arises. Accordingly, a higher reality means the object of valid experience or knowledge and a lower reality means the object of invalidated experience or knowledge.

We have not so far made any reference to the absolute reality, which is regarded as of the highest order, and in comparison with which, all the realities established even by the strongest evidence available in the domain of normal experience are of a lower order and are regarded as having only apparent existence. But here also the basis of the distinction is the same. According to the advocates of the theory, men of extraordinary spiritual attainments are believed to obtain a kind of experience, that may be called transcendental experience, which invalidates all the experiences of diversities, in the light of which all diversities of normal experience constituting the world-system are proved to have only apparent existence, and the one absolute eternal differenceless Being-Consciousness is alone

known to be real. The source of the distinction of the orders of realities is here also psychological. That which is known by transcendental experience is regarded as the Reality of the highest order, because it is the most valid experience, believed to be incapable of being invalidated by any other experience, and the world of normal experience is said to have a lower order of reality or to be comparatively unreal, because this experience is, according to the advocates of the view, invalidated by the transcendental experience.

Now, we find that whenever we draw any distinction between a higher and a lower order of reality, it is in its true significance a distinction between two ideas or two products of knowledge with regard to the same objective entity, one of them being superseded and invalidated by the other. From this we cannot deduce that one entity is by itself possessed of a reality of a higher order than another entity. Nor can we maintain that two such realities, one of a higher order and another of a lower order, exist together to constitute the actual nature of anything, of any concrete object of valid experience.

(c) Causality implying real non-difference and unreal difference not provable.

Let us then proceed to the examination of the question at issue. It is held that non-difference between the effect and its material cause is of a higher order of reality and that of difference between them is of a lower order of reality. What can this statement mean? The legitimate interpretation that can be given to it in the light of the above discussion is that our knowledge or experience of the difference between the effect and its material cause is

invalidated by our knowledge or experience of non-difference between them. But we find that non-difference between the effect and its material cause, such as between the pot and the earth, between the cloth and the threads, etc., so far as their substance is concerned, are known and experienced along with the relation of difference between them. The one is not found to invalidate the other. Had non-difference invalidated the relation of difference, the latter could not be experienced at the same time with the former. If, however, as in the case of the Sun etc., the true nature had been established by valid inferential proof, and the relation of difference had been a matter of perception, then it might be said that the product of valid inference, which is of a higher order of reality, is present along with the product of invalidated perception, which is to be accepted as only apparently real. But in instances, like those given above, of the relation between the effect and its material cause, the point of non-difference and the point of difference are equally matters of perception. How can an invalid perception and a valid perception exist together and co-operate with each other to constitute the nature of one entity viz. the relation between the effect and the cause ?

Moreover, when we recognise two realities as of two different orders, we are not justified even in speaking of them as two, for the one does not stand on the same plane of existence with the other. Accordingly, if the difference and the non-difference perceived in the relation of causation be regarded as belonging to two distinct planes of existence, if the one is not recognised to be as real as the other, then we are not justified in holding that the causal relation consists of the relation of difference and the relation of non-difference. In one plane of experience or from one point of view, the causal relation should then be regarded

as a relation of difference in the same way as a pot is different from a cloth; and in what is called the higher plane of experience it should be regarded as a relation of non-difference, in the same way as the earth or the cotton is non-different with itself. But both these points of view would lay the axe at the root of causal relation itself. If the relation of difference is emphasised, then one of the related terms cannot be called the cause of another, as the pot cannot be called the cause of the cloth. On the other hand, if the relation of identity or non-difference be emphasised, then also there can be no causal relation, for the terms related are really one, and the same thing cannot be its own cause. Thus the way in which the exponents of the theory under discussion attempt to analyse and explain the causal relation leads to the virtual denial of the causal relation itself.

It may be argued that absolute difference is nowhere to be found. In the case of a pot and a cloth, there is identity in respect of materiality. Even in the case of a spirit and a material thing, there is identity in respect of existence. Yes, this is quite true. Unless there is some point of identity, no comparison between two entities is possible, and no relation of difference between them can be established. The relation of difference invariably implies some identity at the back-ground. Similarly, whenever we speak of a relation of identity between any two entities or objects of thought, it necessarily implies some element of difference, for otherwise they would not be two entities, and to speak of any relation in such a case would involve evident self-contradiction. Thus the relation of difference and the relation of identity or non-difference necessarily imply each other,—each involves an inevitable reference to the other. We think and speak of the

relation of difference or non-difference according as the one or the other is predominant in our experience or thought: it implies not the absence of the other, but the presence of the other as its background. In each case the one is qualified by the other; the relation of identity is always qualified and particularised by the relation of difference, and the latter also is always qualified and particularised by the other. Unqualified non-difference as well as unqualified difference is nowhere to be found and is logically and psychologically impossible to think of.

But we are concerned with two questions. The one is—can every such relation be regarded as a causal relation? Simply because the elements of identity and difference are both present in the nature of the relation between two things, do we or can we regard one of them as the material cause of the other? Would it not be destructive of the law of causation itself? The answer to this question is obvious. The second question is, is there any justification for regarding either identity or difference as of a higher or a lower order of reality in relation to the other? To this question also, the answer should not be difficult, if our foregoing analysis is accepted. In so far as identity and difference qualify, determine and particularise each other, both must be regarded as true on the same plane of experience. In the relation between an effect and its material cause also, we experience identity and difference qualified, determined and particularised in some particular way by each other. We therefore find no justification for regarding the one as real and the other as merely apparent,—the one as true on a higher plane of experience and the other as true only on a lower plane, which is superseded by the higher.

(b) The Doctrine of identity of substance with difference in features or attributes criticised.

It has been said and it is generally agreed that the elements of identity and difference qualifying each other in any and every way cannot constitute a causal relation. It is a particular form of the relation of identity with difference that determines the relation between the cause and the effect. It is held by the protagonists of the theory, which we are examining here, that when the points of difference do not affect or transform the nature of substance, when the relation of difference arises retaining the identity of substance intact, this form of identity-with-difference constitutes the relation between the cause and effect. The pot is regarded as the effect of earth, because in the production of the pot the substance of the earth is not changed, while several distinguishing characteristics arise differentiating the pot from earth in general. Thus identity of substance with difference in features or attributes is what constitutes the character of the relation between the effect and its material cause.

Now the question is, does the difference in features or attributes touch or in any way affect the nature of the substance of the cause or not? If it does not, either the differentiating features or attributes should be regarded as existing separately side by side with the substance and externally related without touching its nature, or they should be regarded as unreal and apparent, only illusorily appearing to be related to the substance without really being so. If the former of these two alternatives be granted, various difficulties would arise. The production of the differentiating features or attributes would be inexplicable, and the law of thought which demands a sufficient cause

for the production of every object and event would be violated. Again, if their production were granted, no relation between them and the substance could be logically established. In the absence of any relation between the substance of the cause and the differentiating characteristics of the effect, the very idea of effect would be impossible. The pot would not be conceived as a pot at all, unless the specific features of the pot are related to the substance of earth, and the two are taken together in thought as qualifying each other. This would lead to the absurd conclusion that the substance of the cause is present, certain specific features inexplicably arise, they remain with the substance, but are not connected with it, and the effect is really not produced. Thus as a result of the attempt to explain the relation between cause and effect, the effect vanishes, the causal relation which was the subject-matter of explanation is found to be nowhere.

If the latter alternative be resorted to, viz. that the distinguishing characteristics of the effect are unreal, then also the causal relation itself would have to be regarded as unreal. This would mean that what is called a cause is not really a cause, it is not really producing any effect, it is merely what it is. Now, as every object in the world of experience, is found to be an effect of some material cause, as every object is a cause in relation to some object and an effect is relation to another, the unreality of the causal relation would make the entire world of experience unreal. This would be a great violence to our experience and knowledge, and inconsistent with the very notion of causation, which is a fundamental principle of our thought. Further, the unreality of the distinguishing features of the effect could be recognised only if the distinguishing features were at first experienced and afterwards this ex-

perience were invalidated by the valid experience of the substance, i. e. if with the perception of the nature of the substance of the cause, the distinguishing features of the effect were found to disappear. But this never happens in our normal experience. We experience the substance and the specific features of the effect, i. e. the points of identity and difference between the cause and the effect at the same time; we find no inconsistency between the two, and consequently do not feel the necessity of regarding the one as real and the other as unreal.

Advocate—The relation of difference, which being associated with the relation of identity of substance distinguishes the effect from the cause, is not unreal in the sense that it is invalidated by and disappears with the experience of the identity of substance; but it is called unreal or apparent or belonging to a lower order of reality, because though actually present, it does not really qualify or determine or particularise the nature of the substance.

Critic—Such an argument would involve the fallacy of *Petitio Principii*. That the nature of the substance is in no way modified by the difference that arises with the process of causation is not independently proved. It is sought to be proved by the unreality or apparent reality of the difference, and the latter is sought to be established on the ground of the former. Such arguments cannot of course be accepted as fair. Here the main point of contention is whether the nature of the substance is in any way modified by the production of the effect. If the non-modification of the substance is to be proved on the ground of the unreality of the relation of difference, the latter is to be proved on independent ground. If this unreality of the difference is

to be proved on the ground that it does not modify the substance of the cause, this absolute identity of substance in causation has to be proved on other independent grounds. But such proof is unavailable. Therefore the character of the relation between the identity and difference involved in the cause-effect-relation remains unexplained.

(c) Invariable identity of substance in causal relation disproved by instances of causes transformed.

Advocate—In cases of the relation between an effect and its material cause,—such as between a pot and the earth, a cloth and the threads, a gold bangle and the gold etc.,—we actually experience that the nature of the substance of the material cause remains unchanged—we know by direct observation that the earth, the threads and the gold remain exactly the same in substance after the production of the pot, the cloth and the bangle respectively as before their production. Such observation may be regarded as supplying us with a ground for inferring that in all cases of the production of effects from material causes, the substance remains identical.

Critic—The generalisation is too hasty, for the observation is one-sided. In numerous other cases we observe that the material cause is modified and transformed substantially in the process of the production of effects. Thus milk changes into curd, a seed is transformed into a tree, food is transformed into the tissues of the animal body, and so on. In cases of the production of effects by the process of chemical combination, the material causes which combine together are found to be modified into altogether new substances. How can we, in

the face of such instances, arrive at a general conclusion that the nature of the substance of the material cause remains unmodified through the production of effects? How can we establish that though certain specific features arise in the cause to constitute the nature of the effect, the substance of the cause is untouched by these distinguishing features?

Advocate—Though in the instances of the kind mentioned above the identity of the substance of the cause in the effect is not so obvious to normal observation, still deeper insight and closer examination can discover this identity of substance. If such identity were not present and could not be found out, then anything might be regarded as the material cause of anything else, and there would be no order or system in the relation between cause and effect.

Critic—The argument may be accepted as partially valid; but it does not prove the theory we are criticising. There may be some identical element between milk and curd, but that identical element is by itself neither milk nor curd. But since milk is accepted, from the stand-point of normal experience, as the material cause of curd, it cannot be admitted that the material cause has remained as it originally was, that its nature has not been affected in any way by the process of causation. It may be contended that the particles of milk, which really constitute the substance of milk, are only re-arranged in the production of curd and hence the identity of substance remains intact; but this interpretation would not be applicable to the relation between the seed and the tree, the food and the tissue, and many other cases. What can be justly and safely asserted from the observation of the various kinds of effects and their respective material causes, is that some identity

between the cause and the effect always remains in and through the emergence of differences. It cannot be said that the cause is wholly transformed into something altogether different from itself, nor can it be said that the substance of the cause admits of no change or modification at all in the production of the effect ; but what is actually found is that certain differences emerge out of the cause for the formation of the effect, some essential identity also is preserved. The identity and the difference are both perceptible in the causal relation, and each of them is found to qualify, determine and particularise the other. We find no adequate logical ground for regarding the one as more or less real than the other. Hence the theory of causation, expounded by the school of thought we are criticising, is found to be not justified by convincing logical reasoning.

Concluding Remarks.

On previous occasions we examined the theory of Modification, holding that the material cause is actually transformed into the effect which is really different as well as non-different from it, and also the theory of absolute Origination, holding that the effect is something altogether different from the cause, but originating from it. We found that these theories also are beset with difficulties and vitiated by logical inconsistencies. Thus we are painfully led to the conclusion that all the attempts which have been made by the different schools of philosophical thought to supply a logical explanation for the riddle of the causal relation and to bring about a reconciliation in terms of the categories of abstract logic, between the relation of identity and the relation of difference involved in the relation between the effect and its material cause have been futile. From the stand-point of logic the causal relation,

though experienced and acknowledged by everybody, appears to remain as unexplained as ever.

The Theory of Existence as the material cause of the world Represented.

In the foregoing discussion we have examined the theory, which holds that in the production of effects, the material cause remains essentially unchanged, and that the various elements of difference which are observed in the effects belong to a lower order of reality and are therefore relatively unreal. The exponents of this theory apply this view of causation to their attempt at determining the nature of the ultimate cause of the universe. They hold that all the particular existences of the world are of the nature of effects, and hence must be produced from some material causes. What are found to be material causes in relation to their effects are themselves also found to be produced and are therefore effects in relation to their own material causes. This chain of causation must have an ultimate end, for otherwise the demand of our thought for a sufficient cause of all effects will remain unsatisfied. This ultimate end of the causal series must be a self-existent absolute cause,—a cause which eternally exists by itself and is not the effect of any other cause. This cause must necessarily be of a perfectly simple nature, for whatever is of a complex nature must be capable of being analysed into simpler elements, must have a particularised form of existence and must be of the nature of an effect. Pursuing this line of argument, the exponents of this theory arrive at the conclusion that the entire universe of complex temporal existences must have as its ultimate material cause one absolute eternal Being or Existence. In accordance with their view of causation, this Being or

Existence does not undergo any modification or transformation in the production of these diverse effects. It remains identically the same throughout eternity, and is nevertheless the material cause of this diversified world. This world of diversities has no substance other than the substance of that Being, and hence the world is identical with that Being in substance. It is not that the substance of the Being has been actually modified into particularised substances qualified by various elements of difference and has thus produced or transformed itself into this diversified world. According to their interpretation of the causal relation the Being or Existence, which is the material cause of the world of effects, remains essentially unchanged, unqualified, unparticularised, but *somehow* differences arise in the effects. The significance of this *somehow* will be discussed in the sequel. These differences, in accordance with their theory, are of a lower order of reality, i. e. are not real in the sense in which the identity of the substance is real. They speak of the identity of the substance as transcendentally or absolutely real, and the differences observed in the effects as phenomenally, or empirically real. The lower order of reality cannot, according to them, truly modify, determine or particularise the higher order of reality. Consistently with this theory, they infer that the world of diverse effects, though produced from the Being or Existence, does not really bring about any modification, determination or particularisation in the nature of its cause. Hence according to this doctrine, from the standpoint of transcendental or absolute reality, the Being or Existence, unqualified, unmodified, unparticularised, is alone real, and the world of diversities is unreal. From the standpoint of phenomenal or empirical reality, the world with differences is real, and it is from this lower point of view that the Being appears to be qualified, modified and particularised.

Thus the exponents of this view are led to the conclusion that the conception of material cause is ultimately identical with the conception of substratum, and the conception of effect is ultimately identical with that of appearance or illusory manifestation. Accordingly what is called causation is merely a link, from the point of view of normal experience, between two orders of realities, or between the real and the unreal, between the real substratum and the unreal appearances experienced on it. The world of diversities may accordingly be called either the effect of the Being or the appearance of the Being, and the Being may be called either the material cause of the world or the substratum of the world. With regard to the relation between the world and the Being, the conclusion, that follows from their line of thinking, is that the world is really non-different from the Being and is only apparently different from It. In the light of what they regard as absolute or transcendental experience, the eternally self-identical, changeless, attributeless Being alone really exists by Itself, and the ideas of causation, manifestation, particularisation, etc. are found to be unreal products of the lower planes of experience.

Critical Examination.

Now, we pass to the critical examination of this doctrine. We have already examined the conception of one attributeless, changeless, differenceless Being or Existence as the ultimate substratum of all the beings or existences of our experience, the conception of one attributeless, changeless, differenceless, self-luminous consciousness as the knower and revealer of these beings or existences, and the conception of the absolute oneness of the Being and the Consciousness. We have found that the advocates of this doctrine could

not base these fundamental conceptions of their philosophy on invincible logical grounds. The arguments which they adduced for establishing the truth of their conceptions could not stand the test of logical scrutiny. Then we have examined their theory of causation, on the strength of which they seek to establish that this Being-Consciousness, though not undergoing any change or modification, though without any attribute or activity or difference in its real nature, is the material cause of the world of diversities. The examination has shown that their interpretation of the relation between cause and effect does not explain, but rather seeks to explain away, the fact of causation, that they cannot offer any convincing logical justification for their regarding the effect as a reality of a lower order than the cause, or, in other words, asserting the effect to be an unreal appearance of the cause, that they fail to prove how the emergence of differences in the effect can be possible without any change or modification of the substance of the cause.

Now, with the refutation of their conceptions of Being and Consciousness and their identity, and of their logical interpretation of the relation between cause and effect, their theory that the Being-Consciousness is the material cause of the diversified world becomes groundless. Hence any elaborate refutation of this theory becomes unnecessary. Let us, however, examine it a little more closely on the assumption of the correctness of their interpretation of the nature of the relation between cause and effect.

According to their interpretation of the causal relation, the substance of the cause remains identical, unmodified, untransformed in the effect, and the elements of difference, which distinguish the effect from the cause and differentiate

one effect from other effects produced from the same material cause, are only apparent. They establish it on the strength of the observation that in all effects produced from earth, the substance of earth remains identical and the nature of earth is in no way changed. Similarly in all objects produced from gold or iron or wood or any other substance, the nature of gold, iron etc. remains unaffected. In all such instances of causal relation, only some differentiating features, attributes, relative characteristics and consequent different names appear in some way and are added on to the permanent unchanging substance of the cause. Not only that; in these cases when the effect is destroyed, the destruction happens only to the apparent elements of difference, while the substance which is identical in the cause and the effect is not affected by it. Hence in all the states of the production, the sustenance and the destruction of the effect, the material cause remains identically the same.

Let us ignore the various other kinds of instances of cause and effect, to which this interpretation is altogether inapplicable, and let us, with the exponents of the view in question, admit that the nature of the substance of the material cause remains identically the same in all effects produced from it, and that all these effects, though distinguished from one another as well as from the cause in respect of those apparent or unreal features and attributes, participate in the essential nature of the cause and are substantially identical with it. Now, let us see if this interpretation can be consistently applied to the relation between the world and its supposed material cause, viz. the ultimate Reality. According to the expounders of this conception, Existence, consciousness and self-luminosity are not attributes of the ultimate Reality, because the ultimate

Reality is attributeless. Hence self-luminous-conscious-Existence is the real substance of that Reality. If the substance is regarded as remaining identical in all the effects produced from it, the plurality of objects in the universe, however apparently different from one another in respect of their particularised forms and features and relative attributes, must participate in the nature of self-luminous-conscious-Existence. Accordingly, the essential nature of every object of the world ought to be conscious and self-luminous. But this is contrary to all experience.

It cannot be consistently argued that the self-luminous-conscious-Existence is really present as the substance of all objects, but that it is not experienced. In all the instances, on the observation of which they base their conception of the causal relation, the nature of the substance is observed along with the apparent elements of difference. In none of them do we find that the apparent differentiating characteristics transform the essential nature of the substance beyond recognition. It is only in cases of illusion that the nature of substratum is found to be altogether veiled by the apparent unreal elements. But a case of causal relation is not a case of illusion ; it is a case of valid knowledge. The advocates of the theory also have not derived their conception of the relation between the material cause and its effect from the experience of illusion. How then, consistently with their view of the causal relation, can they infer that the world of unconscious objects is the effect of consciousness ?

They may contend that Existence is found to be inherent in the nature of all objects, that all objects, as they appear as particularised forms of Existence, participate in the essential nature of Existence. They may fur-

ther point out that the presence of self-luminous consciousness also is evident from the manifestation of objects. Thus, they may argue, that it is not true that Existence-Consciousness is not substantially perceptible in the nature of the objects of the world. But this contention does not meet the point at issue. They themselves also draw a clear line of distinction between conscious and unconscious objects. How can it be said that the unconscious objects are essentially conscious and that this consciousness is perceptible in their nature ? Then again, Existence, in the sense in which they conceive it, implies self-existence ; but this self-existence is evidently not perceptible in the nature of the effects. Thus even according to their interpretation of the causal relation, it is difficult to establish the causal relation between the attributeless Being-consciousness and the objective world.

Again, whenever in the world of our normal experience, we observe the production of effects, we find that either the material cause has an inherent power and tendency to modify or manifest itself into particular kinds of effects, or it acquires this power and tendency by coming in contact with other co-operative factors, or some agent, i. e. efficient cause, acts upon it and produces the effects out of it. None of these conditions are fulfilled by Being-Consciousness, as conceived by the exponents of the theory in question. As this Absolute Reality is conceived as an attributeless, powerless, actionless entity, It cannot be a cause of the first kind and cannot by Itself supply us with any explanation for the production of the objective world. Since it is one without a second, It cannot be regarded as dependent upon and moved by any extraneous co-operative factors or efficient agencies to produce the diversities of the world. Thus the actual production of the world of effects.

cannot be accounted for by reference to Being-Consciousness as conceived by this school of thought.

To elucidate: Wherever we observe any causal relation, the cause is found to have a potency to produce the effect. Nowhere do we find a cause, which is without any potency or attribute or activity, which exists in, by and for itself, but which still produces some effects. To think that an Entity does nothing and has no capacity and inclination to do anything, and at the same time to think that it produces a diversity of effects, appears to involve a logical self-contradiction. But the exponents of the view under consideration maintain that Brahman or Being-Consciousness is absolutely without any potency or power or attribute or tendency, existing solely in, by and for itself, and that such Brahman is the cause of this world of diverse effects. We may find in our experience material causes, which are by themselves inactive and indifferent to the production or non-production of effects; but in such cases also these causes are found to possess particular characteristics, by virtue of which they can become causes of particular kinds of effects, and some efficient causes are found necessary to act upon such material causes in order to have those particular kinds of effects produced from them. But pure Existence-Consciousness is conceived as not possessing any such characteristics, and there is no second Being that can possibly act upon it as an efficient cause for producing the world of effects. How can then this Being-Consciousness be conceived as the cause of this world ? Moreover, the admission of the causal relation would make Brahman relative in accordance with the principle of the mutuality of cause and effect.

The advocates of the theory find themselves placed in a puzzling situation. If the world be accepted as a real

effect of a real cause, they cannot reconcile such a real causal relation between Brahman and the world with their conception of Brahmân as the changeless, attributeless, powerlsss Existence-Consciousness. On the other hand, if Brahman be not regarded as the cause of the world, this world of the plurality of effects has to be conceived either as a self-existent Being outside of and with no connection with Brahman or as the product of some other cause existing independently of Brahman. All such alternatives are unacceptable to them, because they are inconsistent with the non-duality of Brahman. To get rid of the situation, they have recourse to the theory of Illusory causation.

Having failed to explain causally the actual production of the world of diversities consistently with and in terms of their conception of the Absolute Reality, viz. the one non-dual, attributeless, changeless, powerless, inactive, self-luminous Being-Consciousness, they feel compelled to have recourse to the theory of Illusion. They suppose that causation is illusory, that this beginningless and endless world of a countless variety of well-ordered objects and events is an unreal appearance on the real substratum of Being-Consciousness. They suppose that the world is the product of a mysterious dynamic power, which is neither real nor unreal, neither different from nor identical with the Absolute Reality. That power inexplicably makes this attributeless Reality appear as this world of wonderfully harmonious diversities without in the least affecting its non-duality and transcendent self-luminous character. We shall now expound and examine this theory of illusion and Illusory causation.

The Theory of Illusory Causation Represented.

Illusion is a fact of our normal experience. When we analyse this fact of Illusion, we find that (1) there is a

substance, the real nature of which is veiled, (2) there is an object which appears on the substratum of that substance and which is actually perceived, (3) there is a perceiving subject, to which that illusory object appears, (4) this perception is invalidated by valid knowledge of that substance. Take the case of my illusory perception of the shell-silver. In this case the shell is a real substance, the true nature is veiled at the time of the illusion; silver is the object which appears on the substratum of this shell and becomes the object of perception ; I am an individual perceiving subject, to whom the silver appears and who perceives the silver in the place of the shell ; when I examine the nature of the object closely, I acquire valid knowledge of the real substance, viz. the shell, and am convinced that my perception of the silver was false and that it was never really present at the place where I perceived it.

It is undeniable that all these factors are involved in the nature of Illusion. Now, the question is, what is the logical character of this object of illusory perception, e. g. the silver in the above instance ? Is it to be regarded as existent or non-existent or both existent and non-existent or neither existent nor non-existent ? This question is connected with another question, viz. is the illusory perception truly a case of perception, or is it a case of imagination or remembrance misinterpreted as perception ?

The exponents of the view we are considering have most carefully pointed out the fallacies of regarding this illusory perception as a case of imagination or remembrance projected on the substance. If the object of this perception could be proved to be a product of imagination or memory and falsely superimposed upon the real substance and

misinterpreted as a perceived object, then this object might be regarded as absolutely non-existent, so far as this particular place is concerned. But at the time of illusion all the conditions of perception are found to be present, and all attempts to explain away perception or to reduce it into any other form of experience are also found to be futile. All the consequences of a valid perception of an object are also experienced, so long as the illusory perception lasts, such as producing the feelings of fear, lust, anger, greed etc. and the impulse to act for attaining, removing, destroying, flying away from, etc. according to the nature of the object so perceived. Hence, according to the view in question, this illusion must be regarded as a case of perception, and the object of this illusory perception must be regarded as not non-existent.

But as this perception is invalidated and superseded by more careful perception or some other valid knowledge, it must be regarded as false perception, and its object cannot be accepted as really existent. When the substance, the nature of which was veiled at the time of illusion,becomes truly known, the object which was illusorily perceived on it is proved to be not really existent. Thus the object of illusory perception cannot be regarded either as really existent nor as absolutely non-existent. It cannot be conceived as both existent and non-existent, because such contrary predicates cannot be affirmed of the same object. Therefore it must be regarded as having apparent existence,—existence which is of a lower order than that of the substance itself on which it is perceived and is therefore capable of being falsified or cancelled by the true knowledge of the substance. Arguing in this way the exponents of this view recognise an order of existence, which is distinct from real existence as well as from non-

existence. The object of illusory perception is regarded as having this kind of apparent existence.

Now, as the illusory object has some kind of existence, it must be produced by some cause. Here the substance cannot be regarded as its cause, nor can the perceiving subject be regarded as its cause. The cause must be of such a nature, as can veil the real nature of the substance and can make it appear as something else, and also it must be capable of being destroyed by valid knowledge of the substance. Such a cause the exponents of this theory find in Ignorance. Ignorance is thus established by them as the material cause of the illusory object, because it is this Ignorance which produces it and sustains its apparent existence, and with its destruction this object also is destroyed. This Ignorance also is regarded as having a positive, but apparent, existence,—neither absolutely real or absolutely unreal—sustained by Existence-Consciousness, but destructible by valid knowledge.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION

Introductory.

We have to examine first whether this explanation of the fact of illusion is logically justifiable and then to see how far it helps the advocates of the view to explain the origination and existence of this world of diversities. We have in another connection examined the notion of Ignorance and shall have to deal with it again in the sequel. We are to examine its nature here only so far as it is necessary for our present purpose. The experience of illusion is essentially distinct from such experiences, as, "I did not know anything during my sleep," or "I did not know the substance which I know now," or "There

are many things in the universe which I do not know." In all such cases 'not knowing' is the principal phenomenon of experience. We have noticed previously how this phenomenon the philosophers of this school sought to explain by the supposition of this positive Ignorance, and how they failed to establish their supposition with adequate and consistent logical reasoning. To explain the phenomenon of illusory perception, they further develop their notion of Ignorance and attribute to it a dynamic power to create various objects of perception.

In the case of Illusion there is not only the unknownness of the true nature of the substratum, but also, as they hold, the production of the illusory object with particular features and attributes, which the person under illusion appears to actually perceive with his senses. Can Ignorance, in whatever way it may be conceived, be spoken of as the material cause of these perceptible features consistently with their theory of causation?

The three grounds for proving Ignorance as material cause of illusion inconclusive.

First of all, three grounds are mentioned for establishing Ignorance as the material cause of the illusory object.

(1) Without ignorance relating to the true and complete nature of the substance, the illusory object does not appear, (2) the illusory object continues to exist only so long as this Ignorance exists, and (3) the illusory object disappears with the disappearance of this Ignorance.

Now, these three grounds, even if accepted as valid, do not prove that ignorance is the material cause of the illusory object, because they are found equally in the material cause as well as in any necessary condition of an

effect. For instance, without the presence of light, the colour does not appear, the colour continues to be perceived so long as light exists, and it disappears as soon as light disappears. Can we on that account infer that light is the material cause of the colours perceived ? Similar is the relation between sound and air. We can hear sound only when and so long as there is air ? Can air be regarded as the material cause of sound for that reason ? We can multiply instances. There may be necessary conditions, on which the existence of an object depends, but which cannot on that account be regarded as the material cause. When cloth is produced from the threads, should the threads or the particular arrangements of the threads be regarded as the material cause ? The grounds mentioned above are present in both. Thus Ignorance is not proved to be the material cause of the objects of illusory perception, as distinct from one of their necessary auxiliary conditions.

Then again, the reasons mentioned here are not applicable to all cases of illusion. In the case of the mirage, the illusory perception continues even after the ignorance with regard to the true nature of the substance disappears. Our perception of the sun as a small shining object rising and moving and setting continues, even when we are fully convinced that it is an immensely big fixed substance round which the earth and the other planets are revolving. When we travel in a railway train or any other swiftly moving vehicle, though we know full well that we are moving and the rows of trees and other things around us are fixed, still what is actually perceived is that those trees and other things are moving in the opposite direction. In the face of such facts how can it be established that Ignorance relating to the nature of the substratum is the material cause of the illusory object and the ground of its perception ?

It may be argued that illusory perceptions are produced and maintained by the defects of our organs of perception, the distance of the substance, the deep-seated impressions in our mind, the impressions left by the preceding perception upon the succeeding perception and so on and so forth, and that they serve as the auxiliary conditions co-operating with Ignorance for producing and preserving such effects. But as we find that even in the absence of Ignorance with regard to the nature of the substratum illusion may be produced and sustained by those so-called co-operating conditions, how can it be accepted as an established truth that Ignorance is the material cause and they are mere conditions ?

We have noticed here different kinds of relevant facts. In one kind of instances, such as the absence of knowing anything in sound sleep, the previous want of knowledge of things which we afterwards newly know, Ignorance is present, but no illusion is produced. In another kind of instances, such as the perception of silver on the substratum of shell, serpent on the substratum of rope, etc., Ignorance is present, and illusion also is produced. In some other kinds of instances, such as the perception of the mirage, the smallness of the sun, the movement of the trees etc., Ignorance is absent, but illusion is present. From the observation of such different kinds of instances, we cannot even establish a necessary concomitance between Ignorance and illusory perception. We find that the mere presence of Ignorance cannot produce Illusion, that when illusion is produced, Ignorance is invariably associated with other circumstances, that the presence of certain circumstances can sustain illusion even in the absence of Ignorance. Is there then any justification for holding that Ignorance is not merely a condition, but the true material cause of the illusion ?

Logical requisites of a material cause absent in the case of Ignorance.

Even if an invariable connection between Ignorance and Illusion could be established, would that be a justification for regarding Ignorance as the material cause of Illusion? Are the logical requisites of a material cause present in the Ignorance even in the cases where the appearance of the illusory object presupposes it? It is the shell and the rope which manifest themselves illusorily as the silver and the serpent respectively to some particular perceiving subject. The shell does not appear as the serpent, and the rope does not appear as the silver Thus the nature of the substratum plays an important part in the formation of the nature of the illusory object. If the particular substratum is absent, the particular illusory object becomes absent. It is the existence of the substratum, which gives existence to the illusory object; it is the nature of the substratum, which determines the nature of the illusory object; it is the continuous presence of the substratum, which is necessary for the sustenance of the illusory object. Hence it is the substratum, which ought reasonably to be regarded as the real material cause of this object. Ignorance relating to its real nature is merely an occasion for its manifesting itself as something other than what it is, and its appearance in this or that particular form depends upon other co-operating conditions. Thus Ignorance may be proved in such cases at most as a necessary co-operating condition; but there is no justification for its being regarded as the material cause for the production of the illusion.

Illusory Causation Unprovable.

That the substratum also, viz the shell or the rope, cannot be regarded as the material cause of the illusory

object, viz. the silver or the serpent, in the same sense as the earth, the thread and the milk are the material causes of the pot, the cloth and the curd respectively, is evident to everybody, and we have pointed it out in connection with our discussion on the theory of causation. If it were a real material cause of the illusory object, the illusory object would have an objective existence, even though it had a lower order of reality than the cause, and would then be an object of experience to all perceiving subjects at the same time. But it is found that the same shell or rope is perceived by a particular person as silver or serpent, but not by others. It cannot be argued that Ignorance conceals the real nature of the substratum with reference to a particular perceiving subject and makes it appear as the illusory object in relation to him alone; because the question would arise here, whether this Ignorance has an objective or a subjective existence, and neither alternative would satisfactorily account for the phenomenon. If Ignorance be regarded as having an objective existence and as residing in the substratum, there is no reason why it should give rise to the illusory object in the perception of one individual and not of others, who are looking at it at the same time. If on the other hand Ignorance be regarded as subjective, residing in the perceiving subject, then the material cause of the object of illusory perception should not be regarded as existing outside of the subject, and consequently illusion should not be considered to be a case of perception at all. Moreover, if Ignorance pertains to the nature of the subject even for the time being, no reason can be assigned why at the same time it should conceal and distort the nature of one substance and not of another. Thus we find that neither Ignorance alone nor the substratum in conjunction with subjective or objective Ignorance can be logically proved to be the material cause of the objects

of illusory perception. Hence the phenomenon of illusory causation remains unexplained in terms of the substratum and Ignorance related to it.

Production of illusory object not established, hence Ignorance as material cause cannot be recognised.

All these arguments have been made on the basis of their hypothesis that the object of illusory perception is actually produced and sustained on the substratum of something outside the perceiving subject, and that the subject perceives it as it perceives any other perceptible object. This object is, however, regarded as having an apparent reality, because this perception is invalidated and superseded. Now, whatever form or order of existence the object may possess, perception demands that there should be contact between the perceptible properties of the object and the corresponding organs of perception. The sense-organs of different men being similarly constituted, the same perceptible properties of the same object are expected to produce similar impressions upon sense-organs of different men, and the same object is expected to be perceived similarly by them. But the object of illusory perception is not found to be similarly received by different individuals present at the same time and in the same place. Sometimes one man illusorily perceives objects at a place where other persons in his company perceive nothing at all. Could such a state of things be expected, if it were a case of perception, i. e. if some object were present there and produced impressions upon the sense-organs of the perceiving man from outside, and the man were a mere recepient of the impressions? Hence the hypothesis of the actual production of objects with apparent reality in the cases of illusion cannot be satisfactorily established.

Now, if the production of the object itself cannot be substantiated, the theory of the dynamic causality of Ignorance, which is resorted to for explaining this object, becomes analogous to the recognition of the existence of a mother for explaining the birth of an unborn child.

The Doctrine of the Illusory Appearance of the World represented.

It is this theory of the causality of Ignorance,—which the advocates of the view under consideration enunciate for the explanation of the phenomenon of illusion,—that they apply to the problem of the creation and preservation of the universe. They hold that Brahman,- the eternal, changeless, attributeless, differenceless, absolute Being-Consciousness- is the Substratum of this universe, that the universe consisting of innumerable varieties of objects and events is an illusory object perceived on this Substratum, and that there is one cosmic Ignorance which veils the true nature of Brahman and makes it appear as the world of diversities. In accordance with their theory of Illusory causation, they maintain that though this world is actually produced, it cannot be regarded as either absolutely existent like Brahman or as absolutely non-existent like the hare's horn, but as a positive entity having an unreal or apparent existence. Such existence, since it is distinct in character from both existence and non-existence in the true sense of the terms, since it cannot be explained in terms of these categories of existence and non-existence of formal logic, is regarded as *inexplicable*. This inexplicable existence of the world of effects does not qualify or limit or in any way affect the real absolute existence of the Substratum—Brahman. Hence Brahman exists eternally as the one non-dual, differenceless, attributeless, self-luminous, absolute Reality.

Let us now elucidate the notion of the inexplicable or apparent existence of the world. As we have noticed in the preceding section, by the term "inexplicable or apparent existence" is meant that form of existence, which is distinguished from real existence as well as from the absence of existence. Real existence means that which can never become non-existent, which can never be denied at any time or repudiated by any valid knowledge. Accordingly an entity can be regarded as really existent, if it has neither production, nor destruction nor transformation Its nature must eternally be what it is. Its nature cannot be changed by any process of activity or modification, nor can it be proved to be other than what it is by any process of valid knowledge; on the other hand, by non-existence is meant the total absence of existence, that which can never be an object of experience, or the idea of which involves any self-contradiction. The question of production and destruction does not arise in the case of the non-existent.

Now, in accordance with this phraseology, the world of the objects of our experience cannot be regarded as really existent, because all the objects in it are subject to production, destruction and transformation. They are all of the nature of effects. They have their beginning of existence. What appears in one form at one time passess into a different form at another time. Every particular form of existence has its end. Can any of these objects be regarded as really existent in the above sense? Everything of the world is experienced as having been non-existent before production and becoming non-existent again after destruction, and at the period of existence also it does not remain in the same form all along. It is of such

things that the world is made up. This world, therefore, cannot be regarded as really existent.

That it cannot be regarded as non-existent in the aforesaid sense is obvious to everybody. The world is actually experienced. Though it is a changing world, its presence cannot be denied.

Thus as the nature of the existence of the world cannot be defined either in terms of absolute existence or in terms of absolute non-existence, it is described by the exponents of the theory under examination as 'inexplicable' – *i. e.* as a kind of existence not explicable in terms of existence or non-existence. It is of a lower order of reality than absolute existence but is not absolutely devoid of reality.

It is quite evident, they assert, that an entity having this kind of existence, cannot be self-existent. A self-existent being cannot have any birth or death. That which has birth and death must have derivative existence. It must have a cause, from which it is produced. It is the ultimate cause – the cause which has no birth and death, whose existence is not therefore derivative, and which is consequently not the effect of any other cause, – that alone can be regarded as self-existent. The predicate of existence in the absolute sense of the term can be applied only to this ultimate cause. Accordingly, the world must be regarded as having only derivative existence and as being the product of some self-existent cause. This self-existent cause must also necessarily be self-revealing or self-luminous. This is their conception of Brahman or Being-Consciousness.

This Brahman alone is absolutely real. The world derives its existence from Brahman, its existence is sustained by that of Brahman, it is revealed by the self-luminosity

of Brahman, and when it is destroyed, its diversified existence is merged in the pure existence of Brahman. This effect-world must have a lower order of reality than that of Brahman.

Now, since Brahman, as the ultimate cause of the boundless world of innumerable varieties and changes, must be regarded as having absolute existence, and as such it must be conceived as eternally of the same unchanging nature, and without any complexity or difference or relativity within its character. Thus the position is that Brahman is eternally simple, changeless, differenceless, unrelated, self-existent Being, and at the same time the cause of the world.

Can we explain such a causal connection in the light of any relation of causation that we experience in this world ? The exponents of this theory assert that the most notable instances of the causal connection of this kind we experience in the cases of illusory causation. We find that the shell, the rope etc. manifest themselves as the silver, the serpent, etc. without undergoing any change whatsoever. In other cases where the effects are actually produced from their causes, the latter are found to be transformed into the former. Such transformation or modification is not consistent with the notion of absolute Existence. Therefore the experience of illusory causation must be taken as the basis of the causal connection between Brahman and the world. Accordingly the conclusion is drawn that Brahman is the Substratum, and the world illusorily appears on this Substratum.

The existence of this world of experience must then necessarily be conceived as illusory existence, or in other words, false or unreal existence. It appears, but does not

really exist. The terms, falsity, unreality, inexplicability, appearance, illusion, apparent reality are used by this school of philosophy almost synonymously. They all imply that the world is not really existent i. e. self-existent, that it appears on the substratum of Brahman, that it is not explicable in terms of the categories of existence and non-existence, and that the valid knowledge of the Substratum would invalidate the knowledge of the world as it is experienced.

It has been found that to explain illusory causation this school of thought finds it necessary to recognise the positive, but not absolute, existence of Ignorance, which is regarded as the cause of the illusion, making the substratum appear as the illusory effect. It recognises a similar existence of one cosmic Ignorance, which is the cause of making the attributeless, changeless, Being-Consciousness illusorily appear as the world of diversities. This Ignorance also, though a positive entity, is not a self-existent Reality like Brahman, and is, therefore, conceived as a neither-real-nor-unreal inexplicable agency like its effect, the world. This cosmic Ignorance, being not a self-existent Reality, does not affect the absolute non-duality of Brahman, and thus accounts for the existence of the world as we experience it consistently with the absolute unity and eternally changeless, differenceless, attributeless existence of Brahman.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION.

(a) The Meanings of Existence and Non-existence technical and unjustifiable.

We have here given a brief exposition of the conception of this school of thought, with regard to the nature

and origination of the world of our experience, in order to examine its logical validity. We have found that these philosophers have attached a technical meaning to the terms of common usage, viz. existence and non-existence, reality and unreality, to suit their purpose. Ordinarily by 'existent' we mean what is and by 'non-existent' we mean what is not. Similarly, by 'reality' we mean that the existence of which is proved by valid knowledge, and by 'unreality' we mean that the existence of which is disproved by valid knowledge. The philosophers of this school also generally begin with such meanings of the terms as are sanctioned by common usage, and by means of some logical manipulation they skilfully abandon the common ground and arrive at the technical sense.

They argue in this way :—'*what is*' cannot be '*what is not*'; that which has beginning and end *is not* before the beginning and after the end ; therefore, that which has beginning and end cannot be called '*what is*' : *what is must be* what it is at all times and under all circumstances. Arguing in this way they remove the entire world of effects from the domain of the *existent* or *what is*, and reserves the term for what has no beginning, no end, no change. But have they any right to squeeze out, by the forced application of the laws of identity and contradiction, a conception from a commonly used word, which never implied it.

Further, the application of these laws of formal logic is not quite fair in this case. The element of time has no place in formal logic, but in the field of the valid knowledge of the world of mind and matter, it is found to have an important place. In our experience, in the domain of our valid knowledge, we find no justification for the principle assumed here, that *what is* must always be and must

remain unchanged in character at all times. We find objects, the existence of which is most satisfactorily established by the most careful observation and experiment as well as by valid inference, but which had not existed as such before and which ceases to exist as such afterwards. What justification can there be to regard all such things as *other than existent*, merely on the ground of the abstract principles of formal logic? These principles of course compel us to admit that a thing cannot be existent and non-existent at the same time; but they do not demand that a thing which is existent at one time cannot be non-existent at another time.

Hence this mode of reasoning does not justify these philosophers to regard this world of valid experience as inexplicable in terms of *existent* and *non-existent*, and to invent a category of *neither-existent-nor-non-existent* to determine its nature. The violence which it does to our experience and thought becomes palpable when through this conception of *neither-existent-nor-non-existent* they lead us to the conception of illusory appearance and want us to regard the entire universe as illusory like the rope-snake or shell-silver.

They may argue that though the existence of the changing world of effects, appearing to our valid experience, cannot be denied, it must be distinguished from the existence of the eternally changeless, self-existent Reality, and consequently if the term, *existence*, be applied to the latter, it cannot in the same sense be applied to the former. This argument also is not convincing. There may be different kinds of existent objects, some constantly changing and others relatively permanent, some short-lived and others existing for a long time, some retaining its identity through rapid changes, and others existing in the same

condition with unchanged characteristics for a great length of time. As we experience so many different kinds of existent objects, we may suppose also an existent Entity, which does not admit of any change. How can it be logically demanded that if the latter be called *existent*, the former cannot be called *existent* ?

It may be said that all the objects that we experience as existent at any time, however they may differ from one another in different respects, have the common characteristic of having beginning and end, and must therefore have only derivative existence ; they cannot consequently be described in terms of the same category of *existence* as the beginningless, endless, changeless Being. But commonsense will reply that though non-eternal derivative existence is essentially different from eternal self-existence, existence is a concept which cannot be denied of either of them, and hence there is no justification for regarding the entities possessing non-eternal derivative character as other than existent.

(b) Transcendent Existence as cause or substratum of the universe cannot be established through normal and supernormal experience.

Then again, a question may arise. So far as our experience goes, all the objects of experience within the world are, no doubt, found to have non-eternal changing derivative existence. But what is the proof that the world as a whole also has its beginning and end and can therefore have only a derivative existence ? We know that every object within the world has a cause; but we find also that the cause of every effect is within the world. So far as our knowledge goes, the causal relation exists between two objects or phenomena within this world. How can we

infer from such observation that the world as a whole also must have a cause and that that cause must be some self-existent Entity transcending this world? Such an inference would evidently involve the fallacy of Composition. Thus the transcendent, self-existent, eternal, changeless cause of the entire universe is far from being logically established.

The advocates of the view would say that such an eternal, changeless, self-existent Reality is not altogether beyond the possibility of experience. Changeless Existence is perceived as underlying all objects of experience. There can be no object of actual or possible experience, which can be conceived as without Existence. The forms and attributes of objects may be different and changing and of innumerable varieties. *But Existence is common to them* all, and cannot be conceived as either various or changing. Therefore one unchanging eternal Existence must be conceived as the Substratum of all the various kinds of objects. As all the diverse kinds of objects of actual and possible experience constitute the world, this changeless, eternal, all-pervading Existence must be accepted as the substratum of the entire world.

With regard to this argument of the advocates of the view, we may refer the reader to our discussion about the conception of Existence or Being. In this connection it may be enough to say in reply that though the premises of this argument may be accepted, the conclusion does not follow from them. Existence is a common factor in all the objects of the universe, and the universe as a whole also must be conceived as having existence. But does this mean that Existence is by itself an absolute self-existent Reality and that it is the substratum of all objects within the universe as well as of the universe as a whole? Until and unless

this changeless, non-dual Existence can be experienced in isolation from the concrete objects of experience or its self-existence can be proved on any other independent evidence, the charge of treating a logical abstraction as a self-existent Reality against this view will remain unrepudiated.

It is evident that Existence apart from the existent objects cannot be object of sense-perception, because it does not possess the perceptible properties. Nor can it be an object of inductive inference because no relation of invariable concomitance, on which a valid induction with regard to Existence might be based, is available. Nor can its independent reality be deductively inferred, because we can find out no higher principle from which it can be deduced. The only logical process by which we can arrive at the conception of Existence is logical analysis and abstraction, which cannot establish its independent reality. How then can it be proved that Existence is the ultimate Reality which is the cause from which the existence of the world of objects is derived or which is the substratum on which this world appears ?

It may be contended that Existence apart from any object is experienced in the state of trance. If this be put forward as an argument for establishing the unrelated absolute Reality of Existence, several difficulties would arise. First of all, if the validity of this experience is challenged, one cannot prove it to another. Secondly, those who claim to have experienced this state, are not unanimous with regard to the nature of the Ultimate Reality. Thirdly, it may be asked, what is the nature of the trance. If it is a state of the intense concentration of the mind, then it is quite possible that on account of the attention being fixed on one aspect of a thing,—in the present case, upon the universal changeless existence-aspect of all objects-the

other aspects of things as well as all other things may be absent from the experience for the time being; but this would not prove that other things or aspects are non-existent or really unconnected with it or that it is an independently existent Entity. Moreover, if it were really an object of valid experience in some particular state of the mind, viz. the state of trance, then also it could not be regarded as the absolute transcendental Reality, because every object of experience must be related to the subject and be illumined by the consciousness of the subject and hence must be of the nature of a dependent relative reality.

Thus, reflecting upon the main arguments of this school, we fail to discover a solid logical ground, on which the independent absolute reality of Existence, which is found to be common to all objects of the world, can be established. If then Existence cannot be proved as the absolute independent Reality apart from relation to the existent objects of experience, no reason can be assigned for regarding these objects as of a lower order of reality than Existence,—not to speak of considering them as not existent at all in the sense in which Existence is existent.

(c) Nine conditions of world's being the illusory appearance on Brahman enumerated.

We have previously analysed and examined the nature of Illusion. If we have to accept the doctrine that the world of plurality is an illusory appearance on the substratum of the attributeless changeless unmodifiable eternal Being-Consciousness, viz. Brahman, and as such it is inexplicable in terms of either existent or non-existent in the absolute sense of the terms, we are to be satisfied by incontrovertible logical proofs, (1) that the substratum, Brahman, has

an independent existence unrelated to the world, (2) that its existence is incapable of being denied at any time, past, present or future, (3) that its real nature as the changeless attributeless eternal self-luminous Being is capable of being veiled, (4) that this veiling does not necessitate the recognition of any causal power existing outside and independently of, but related to Brahman, (5) that this veiling does not also require the existence of any external conscious subject, in relation to whom Its nature should be veiled, (6) that without the recognition of any self-existent knowing subject, or any independent causal power or any external co-operative factor, the false appearance of the attributeless powerless changeless Brahman in the form of the diversified world can be adequately accounted for, (7) that the realisation of the true character of Brahman amounts to the repudiation of the world of plurality as a really existent object, (8) that such realisation is true knowledge and its truth can be substantiated, and (9) that in the light of this true knowledge the world is proved to have never really existed in the past, to be not really existing in the present and to be not capable of really existing in the future. Unless these conditions are fulfilled, the world cannot be proved to be an illusory appearance on the Substratum of Brahman.

(1) The first condition unfulfilled, that is, Brahman cannot be known as having independent existence unrelated to the world.

(1) With regard to the first condition, it has already been found that there is no valid means of knowing that Brahman has an independent existence unrelated to the world. It has been found that neither perception, nor inductive or deductive inference nor the trance-experi-

ence can make the attributeless Brahman its object. If Brahman were the object of any such valid knowledge, It would no longer remain an eternal attributeless transcendent Reality beyond the world, but would be one of empirical realities having attributes and modifications, because from the nature of such knowledge only the empirical realities can be its objects. We have also noted the fallacies that would be involved in regarding this Being-Consciousness as the necessary hypothesis ; this would violate the principle of *vera causa* and also commit the fallacy of Interdependence. The exponents of the theory have to fall back upon Revelation embodied in Scriptures, but the drawbacks of the adoption of this course have been discussed at length on many occasions. Even if the Scriptures were accepted as a source of valid knowledge, they also would not be able to give true knowledge of the transcendent unrelated self-existence of the attributeless Brahman ; because they must give knowledge through *words,* and *words* cannot possibly make such a Reality their object. Even a definite conception of such a Reality is not found possible, because as soon as It becomes an object of conception, It becomes a relative, conditional, empirical Reality. Thus the very first condition remains unfulfilled. If Brahman cannot be convincingly proved to have a transcendent existence by Itself, whether the world exists or not, how can Brahman be regarded as the Substratum, on which the world illusorily appears ?

(2) Brahman as non-cancelled in all times cannot be known.

(2) The second condition automatically goes with the first. But even if somehow the transcendent existence of Brahman could be known, the impossibility of its being

negated at any time, past, present or future, could not be the object of any valid knowledge. Direct knowledge can make only a present entity its object and it cannot be related to the past or the future. From the knowledge of the present existence of an entity, we are not justified in inferring that it was never non-existent in its present nature even in the remotest past or that it will not be so in any remote future. From the absence of the knowledge of any change or modification in the entity at the present time, we cannot infer that it is incapable of any change whatsoever at any time.

Two arguments may be put forward to prove the impossibility of the existence of Brahman being negated at any time. First, Brahman is Existence, and Existence cannot be thought of as non-existent at any time without committing the fallacy of self-contradiction Secondly, if Brahman be conceived as subject to origination, change and destruction,—at however long intervals these may be,—It would be of the nature of an effect and would presuppose a cause. If that cause also were of the same nature, it must be the product of another cause, and so on *ad infinitum.* The ultimate cause, which must be recognised for satisfying the demand of the principle of causality, must necessarily be conceived as without origination, change and destruction, i. e. It must be eternal and incapable of Its being negated at any time. From the standpoint of Formal Logic, these arguments are very strong indeed; but formal argument cannot prove the real existence of anything. The concept of Existence is certainly contrary to the concept of Non-Existence, and the one cannot be thought of as the other. But that an Entity corresponding to the concept of Existence really exists outside our thought is not proved thereby. By examining the idea of existence as involved

in the nature of the existent objects, we have found that it can be explained in different ways, and that its being the absolute substance, of which all objects are only particularised manifestations or appearances, is not logically established. The second argument also is of no avail, because there is no incontrovertible ground in our experience on which we can stand to show that the law of Causality demands an eternal changeless cause of all changing non-eternal entities, and that such a cause really exists beyond and behind the world.

(3) Brahman itself cannot be conceived as capable of being veiled.

(3) Now with regard to the third condition. If the unrelated absolute existence of Brahman is assumed to be true, is the conception of *veiling* consistent with Its nature, as conceived by the exponents of this doctrine ? Brahman is conceived as self-luminous Consciousness without any attributes, without any parts, without any difference of aspects or features. Can the nature of such a Being be veiled, so as to make possible any illusory appearance on It as Substratum ? In every case of illusion experienced in the world of normal experience, such as in the cases of rope-snake, shell-silver etc. the substratum upon which the illusory object appears has a general and a particular aspect. The particular characteristics, which can reveal the substance as it truly is, are veiled ; while its general aspect remains inherent in the nature of the illusory object. If the entire nature of the substance were completely veiled, there would be absolutely no relation between the substance and the illusory object, and there would be no reason for regarding the former as the substratum of the latter. Further, in that case, anything might be illusorily perceived in the place of anything what-

soever, as silver in the place of rope and snake in the place of shell. Illusory objects would then have to be regarded as appearing and disappearing by themselves without any reference to the substratum. Therefore some general feature of the substratum must be recognised as present in the illusory appearance superimposed upon it. It is needless to say that if the complete nature of the substance were revealed, there would be no illusion at all. Thus it is found that the difference between general and special features in a substance is a necessary pre-condition of the possibility of illusion upon it.

In Brahman, as it is conceived by the advocates of the doctrine, this very fundamental condition is absent. Brahman is conceived as without any kind of difference within Its character. It is regarded as absolutely devoid of attributes, parts, aspects, features or forms. Hence it cannot be said of It that Its nature is veiled in some aspects and exhibited in other aspects,—that Its special features are veiled and general features are exhibited in the nature of the illusory world.

Advocate.—The aspect of existence of Brahman's nature is found exhibited in the nature of the illusory world, while Its self-luminosity, eternity, infinity, absoluteness, etc., are veiled from view; hence there can be no objection against Its being the substratum of this world of appearance.

Critic.—This argument would imply the virtual abandonment of your conception of Brahman. Do you seriously mean to say that existence is the general character of Brahman and self-luminosity etc. are the special features? In that case Brahman would no longer be what you conceive It to be, viz. attributeless, featureless, changeless Being-Consciousness. Existence, self-luminosity, eternity, infinity

absoluteness etc. are not regarded as distinct attributes or characteristics of Brahman; but they are regarded as identical in ultimate significance, so that the idea of each necessarily leads to the ideas of the others. Hence the veiling of self-luminosity or absoluteness would involve the veiling of the entire nature of Brahman, and the exhibition of Existence would also involve the exhibition of the entire nature. Hence the differenceless nature of Brahman must be either entirely veiled or entirely exhibited. In either case the phenomenon of illusion becomes impossible. Nor can it be said that Being-Consciousness has fancied general and particular aspects and so there can be illusory knowledge of Reality. Because the imagined general and particular aspects of Reality are due to illusion, therefore there will be the absence of those imagined aspects before illusion. And because the distinction between the particular and general aspects of Reality in that case will be illusory, so that distinction cannot be the cause of illusions in general. So the possibility of illusion on the Substratum of Brahman is in no way proved.

(4) Veil of Brahman through some Power inconceivable.

(4) Even if, inconsistently with this school's conception of Brahman, it be maintained that the nature of Brahman may be partly veiled and partly exhibited and thereby illusion may be possible, the question would arise, is there anything in the very nature of Brahman that creates the veil over certain aspects of Its nature or is there anything existing outside and independently of Brahman that is the cause of this veil ? Both these alternatives are inconsistent with the conception of Brahman. So far as our normal experience is concerned, nowhere do we find any object which veils itself by its own power. We cannot even con-

sistently conceive that what veils and what is veiled are the same entity. However, if it be held that Brahman has the mysterious power of partially veiling Its own nature, then Brahman would no longer be the powerless, actionless Being-consciousness, but it must be conceived as possessing an active power within Itself. Further, some questions should arise,—does this power belong eternally to Brahman? If so, does it pertain to Its essential nature or is it an inseparable accident in Its nature? If not, is the power produced in His nature? If the veiling power pertains to Brahman's essential nature, then Brahman should be conceived as essentially of the character of veiled self-luminosity, veiled absoluteness, veiled infinity, and veiled consciousness; that is to say, It should be self-luminous as well as non-self-luminous, absolute as well as relative, infinite as well as finite, conscious as well as unconscious in His essential character. This is evidently inconceivable. If this veiling power be an inseparable accident eternally related to Its nature, then Brahman would have to be conceived as eternally possessing an essential nature and an accidental nature, and in Its essential nature It should be eternally conscious, self-luminous, absolute and infinite, and in Its accidental nature It should be eternally unconscious, non-self-luminous, relative and finite. Even if this position were agreed to, the relation between the essential and the accidental natures could not be logically determined. Further, this veiling power, being eternally present in Its nature, whether as an essential or as an accidental feature, would never disappear, and hence the illusion caused by it could never be destroyed. In the absence of the possibility of the illusory object being destroyed, there would be no ground for regarding it as illusory. Thus the very foundation of the theory of the illusory appearance of the world would be shaken.

If on the other hand this veiling power be regarded as non-eternal and produced in the nature of Brahman, then some cause for the production of this power has to be discovered, and that cause again must be either within or outside the nature of Brahman. If it be within the nature of Brahman and eternally present therein, all the difficulties mentioned above would arise in this case also. Further, no reason could be assigned why the cause being eternally present, the effect would be non-eternal. If this cause also be non-eternal, there would arise the fallacy of *regressus ad infinitum*. Moreover, the production of any such power in the nature of Brahman, whether by a cause within or outside It, would inevitably imply a change or modification in its character. All these are certainly inconsistent with the recognised conception of Brahman.

Thus we see that the advocates of this theory cannot consistently maintain that the veiling power, whatever its character may be, is within the nature of Brahman. Can they accept the position that the veiling power (or the cause of this power) exists outside and independently of Brahman ? This would be quite incompatible with the doctrine of the non-duality of Brahman. Even if the non-duality of Brahman could be abandoned, no relation could be established between Brahman and this veiling power, and hence the illusion could not be accounted for in terms of such an unrelated foreign power.

(5) As Brahman cannot be said to be unconscious, conscious or self-conscious, it cannot be veiled.

(5) In all cases of illusion with which we are acquainted in the domain of our normal experience, there is a

knowing subject with imperfect power of observation, to which a substance illusorily appears as something other than what it really is. The nature of illusion, when logically analysed, points also to this requisite condition of its possibility. The substance which becomes the substratum of illusion, may be either conscious or unconscious, and if conscious, it may be either self-conscious or not-self-conscious. If the substance is unconscious, it cannot exhibit itself to itself either in its true nature or in any false nature. Its appearance, whether true or illusory, demands the existence of some conscious subject. If a substance is conscious, but not self-conscious, it can know only external objects which appear to its sense of perception, but cannot form any definite conception of its own self as distinguished from the objects of its knowledge. Hence such a substance also cannot be a substratum of illusion, unless it becomes an object of the knowledge of another subject, that perceives it imperfectly, takes a partial view of its nature and superimposes a different object upon it. If a substance is self-conscious, it does not in the normal waking condition appear to itself as what it is not. But in dream, in hallucination, under the influence of intoxication, or as a result of self-forgetful imagination, reverie or meditation, a self-conscious substance sometimes appears to itself as what it is not. But in these cases also there is difference between subject and object. It is the mental modification, which becomes the object, and the permanent knowing consciousness that distinguishes itself from them and at the same time becomes conscious of itself in relation to them, is the subject. We are not here concerned with any explanation for the possibility of this subject-object-relation within the nature of the self-conscious substance. But it is a fact of experience. In the absence of such a real subject-object-relation within, no self-consciousness

would be possible, and hence no error with regard to one's own nature would be possible. Thus it is found that it is only in the case of a self-conscious substance having the distinction of subject and object within itself, that the same substance may be said with some plausibility to be the substratum of the illusion as well as its perceiver.

Now, the question is, can Brahman be regarded as the substratum as well as the perceiver of this illusory world? To answer this question, it has to be decided whether Brahman is unconscious, conscious or self-conscious. If it be held that Brahman, though pure consciousness and the ground of all revelation, is not Itself conscious of any object, then Brahman must be the object of knowledge to some other knowing subject, to which Its nature should be partially veiled and partially manifested and which should be the perceiver of the illusory world. If it be said that the finite knowing subjects are the perceivers of this illusory world, then these subjects being presupposed by the appearance of the illusory object, must be regarded as already existing before and independently of this cosmic illusion. In that case the existence of the finite subjects should have to be conceived as outside and independent of the existence of Brahman, as well as outside and independent of the illusory cosmos. This is of course not accepted by the exponents of the theory of cosmic Illusion. If, as it is maintained, the finite subjects also are the products of cosmic Illusion, the production of Illusion cannot be explained as in relation to them. If it is said in reply that the finite subjects and the illusory world of diversities are both without beginning in time, then it will be retorted that in that view of the case, instead of regarding the finite subjects and the objective world as illusory, they ought to be recognised as eternally real and essentially related to the nature of the Absolute

Reality. If it be said that the necessity for the recognition of the logical priority of the attributeless changeless absolute Being–Consciousness leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the world of the changing diversities is Its illusory manifestation, then it will be asked, why do you not for the same reason recognise the finite subjects, which are the logical presupposition of any illusion on the substratum of the attributeless Existence, as being independent of this illusion ?

Further, how can the finite subjects know that the world is an illusory appearance, and not the true objective reality as they experience it to be ? Evidently this can be possible, if they can make the true and complete nature of Brahman, the substratum of this cosmic Illusion, the object of their knowledge. But if they are the products of this Illusion, they can never possibly know the real nature of Brahman, because so long as they are, the illusion is evidently present and when the real nature of Brahman is revealed, the illusion being gone, they also are not. Thus the finite subjects can never know the world to be an illusion, because its negation can never be experienced by them. Even if it be admitted that the finite knowing subjects, though within the world, have some transcendental aspects, by virtue of which they can transcend this world, then also the difficulty cannot be avoided, because Brahman has in that case to be recognised as having real properties through which It can become an object of valid knowledge to those subjects. Thus if the world of illusion be regarded as the object of the experience and knowledge of the finite subjects, no consistent explanation for this cosmic phenomenon can be offered.

If this alternative be rejected and it is asserted that Brahman is a self-conscious Being and is Itself the percei-

-ver of this illusion, just as a man falsely perceives himself in various forms and in various relations in dreams, reveries etc, then alse insoluble difficulties would arise. If Brahman be conceived as a self-conscious Being, then It must be a subject and object at the same time; i.e. It must have in Its essential nature an objective feature as distinct from the subjective consciousness, and this objective feature, according to the view of the advocates of this doctrine, must be non-self-luminous. Then again, Its knowledge of Itself must be imperfect, so that Its nature may be partially veiled and partially manifested to Itself as the subject. Moreover, Its nature also must be complex, having different aspects and features, some of which may be veiled and some revealed. Further, It must be regarded as capable of having different states, corresponding to the states of waking, dreaming, reverie etc. of a man, i. e. Its nature must be subject to modification. All these are inconsistent with the conception of Brahman. If these different states of Brahman are not admitted, It must be conceived as eternally manifesting Itself in the form of the world of diversities, and in that case it, being never negated, cannot be regarded as illusory. Thus we find that the fifth condition of the possibility of the cosmic Illusion on Brahman as the substratum is not fulfilled.

(6). Even admitting veil appearances cannot be accounted for.

(6) Even assuming that the ultimate Reality behind the world is the attributeless changeless infinite eternal Being-Consciousness, called Brahman, that Its nature is capable of being partly veiled without any external force or external subject, can it be adequately explained consistently with this conception of Brahman, how such a

well-ordered universal system comprising such a bewildering variety of objects and events is illusorily produced and regulated ? Mere veiling of the specific nature of a substance is not enough for the production of any illusory object. My ignorance of the presence of a rope before me or my vague apprehension of something present which I cannot recognise as a rope, will not necessarily give rise to the perception of a serpent in its place. Specially when the so-called illusion does not consist in the sudden perception of one object with which I was already acquainted in other places, but it consists in the observation of a series of undreamt-of objects and events harmoniously related and systematically regulated in accordance with definite laws and principles, the mere ignorance of the nature of some substratum cannot of course be expected to adequately account for it. How then can such a world,-which is boundless in time and space, in which all the innumerable diversities of objects and events are found to be so organically related to one another and to be governed by such inexorable laws, in which many events that will occur in the future can be predicted long before with accuracy and precision,—be expected to be fully accounted for by mere reference to the veiling of the nature of Brahman ?

Even if the attributeless Brahman is accepted as the ultimate Reality and even if for the sake of logical consistency with this conception of Reality, the world has to be regarded as an illusory appearance, even then for the purpose of accounting for what the actual nature of this world is, some cause has to be admitted, which should be adequate to explain the wonderful order and adjustment that is discovered and proved in its nature. The advocates of the theory under consideration do not give us any idea

of the character of this cause, but merely appeal to the presence of a positive Ignorance inexplicably pertaining to the nature of Brahman. We have on several occasions examined this conception of Ignorance, and found the logical defects of this conception. We have also found that even if Ignorance be assumed to have a positive existence, it may at most explain the veiling of the nature of a substance, but not the production of a variety of illusory objects on that substratum. We shall revert to the cosmic Ignorance in the sequel also.

(7, 8, 9). Realisation of Truth and subsequent cancellation of the world unfounded hence illusoriness of the world non-established.

(7, 8, 9) The fundamental test of the illusoriness of any object of experience is that when the valid knowledge of the true character of the substratum is attained, that object either disappears altogether or in the light of that knowledge it is convincingly proved to be not what it appears to be, and in both the cases the decisive conclusion is reached that it never really became what it appeared to be. Is there any possibility of such disillusionment in the case of the world ? It would require the valid knowledge of Brahman as the unrelated attributeless non-dual Substance. Is such knowledge attainable ? Does Brahman ever become the object of knowledge ? We had occasions to discuss this point on several occasions, and in connection with the first and the fifth conditions of this section as well. We have found that the possibility of the valid knowledge of Brahman as the unrelated, attributeless, non-dual Being-Consciousness cannot be established. The absence of the consciousness of the world at the time of trance is no proof of the disappearance of the world as

false, for this absence of the consciousness ot the world is found in the state of deep sleep, etc. as well. There is no proof that at any time such valid knowledge is attained viz. that the world never really existed,—that its real existence is deniable at all times. Hence the illusoriness of the world is far from being established.

(d) Illusoriness defined as absolute negation of the world in the Substratum-Brahman untenable.

It may be said that in the very conception of Brahman, there is the notion of the denial of the real existence of the world. Let us examine this logical position of the advocates of this theory. Here the question is,—is that negation apparent or empirical or transcendental ? Now, if this negation is taken as apparent, then the illusory character of the universe will not be proved, because a negation of a less essence (apparent) cannot prove the falsity of its counter-entity (that which is negated) which being empirical is of a greater essence. That negation can not be called empirical, because it is well-known that a counter-entity which is empirical in character is contradictory to an absolute negation of the same character.

The so-called negation in dream of a dream-object cannot be cited in support of the contention that a negation can falsify its counterentity of the same essence, because there is in this case no valid cognition of the substratum upon which the illusory object is superimposed. The knowledge of real negation invariably implies the knowledge of a substratum which is greater in essence than the entity negated, because the said substratum becomes endowed with the absolute negation of the illusory object superimposed upon it. Moreover, in the cases of illusory

objects like shell-silver, rope-snake etc., we experience their 'being' and 'non-being' as of unequal essence, that is, 'being' in those cases is illusory and 'non-being' is empirical. If being and non-being of the same essence are at the same time recognised in the same object, then in no case would contradictories contradict each other. Hence because it is impossible for a counterentity and its negation of the same essence to remain together, the negation of the empirical world cannot be said to be empirical.

The negation of the world cannot be said to be transcendentally real, because in that case there will be the loss of non-duality. If it be asserted that there is no loss of non-daulity because this negation of the world is of the very essence of Brahman, then our reply is that, it will not be possible for that negation, which is qualified by the property of negativity, to be the essence of Brahman. To admit that negation is the essence of Brahman in its pure form is absurd. A negation cannot be of the nature of pure consciousness, because a negation is dependent on the counterentity, but consciousness is not of such a character. Besides, because the negation is not recognised at the time of illusion, but consciousness is in some respect known at the time of illusion, negation and consciousness cannot be of the same character. So the said absolute negation is not transcendental in character. To consider the alleged negation to be of more essence than empirical entities, it should be recognised as of the nature of pure consciousness. In other words, it has to be admitted that this absolute negation which is transcendental in character is of the nature of the substratum of the universe. But this pure nature of consciousness is not contradictory to any counterentity. The negation of the nature of pure consciousness cannot be determined by any counterentity, hence to speak of it as

contradictory of any counterentity is meaningless. Besides, if the negation be of the nature of Brahman, then owing to the impossibility of the relation of support and the supported in the case of non-difference, negation will not reside in Brahman which is the substratum of the universe, and thereby the falsity which consists in the negation being co-existent with the counter-entity will not be possible.*

Thus it is found that even if it be accepted as a hypothesis that the world is an illusory appearance and that the negation of this world is involved in the conception of its substratum, Brahman, the nature of this negation cannot be logically determined and its validity cannot be established.

Concluding Remarks.

From all these considerations, it is evident that there is no satisfactory ground for proving that the world of our normal experience is an illusory appearance superimposed upon the attributeless changeless Being-Consciousness. The very possibility of the appearance of such an illusory world has been found to be incapable of being

* According to the advocates of the view under consideration, the falsity of the world is primarily proved on the strength of scriptural testimony, and there are reasonings which favour the substantiation of the same conclusion. This procedure is not sound in as much as it involves the fallacy of interdependence On the strength of inference, the meaning of the scriptures should be ascertained, and after that ascertainment has been done, inference will be brought forward in favour of the meaning of the scriptures ascertained through inference. Because the scriptures (श्रुति) have for their purport non-dualism, inference will make us aware of the unreal thing; and the knowledge of Reality will be attained, when the falsity of the world will be inferred, and through the inference of the falsity of the world, the scriptures will have for its purport the non-dualism of Reality. Thus, there is interdependence.

logically established, consistently with the doctrine of the non-duality, attributelessness, partlessness, changelessness, self-luminosity and absoluteness of the ultimate Reality, viz. Brahman.

When this illusory character of the world of diversities remains unestablished, the category of inexplicability or neither-existence-nor-non-existence, invented for describing the nature of this world becomes unwarranted, because it is not proved that the category of existence is inapplicable to it.

SECTION IV.

Cosmic Ignorance Examined.

INTRODUCTORY.

We find that for the purpose of accounting for the origination and preservation of the world, the exponents of this theory have felt the necessity of making several assumptions. First, they have assumed that the ultimate Reality is an attributeless changeless inactive self-luminous non-dual Being-Consciousness. Secondly, as this world of changing diversities must owe its existence and continuance to this Reality, they have to admit that this ultimate Reality is the cause of the world. Thirdly, as the recognition of the presence of an effect on the same level of existence with the cause would be incompatible with the absolute non-duality of the ultimate Reality, they, in search for some way of escape from this uncomfortable position, have relied on the experience of illusion in this world and have declared the entire world as illusory. Fourthly, for the purpose of giving a plausible explanation for the cosmic Illusion, they have recognised a cosmic Ignorance.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION.

Cosmic Ignorance cannot be inferred as the cause of the inexplicable effect.

The main argument of this school in support of the supposition of cosmic Ignorance, is that an effect, which is inexplicable or neither-real-nor-unreal in character, requires a causal principle of similarly inexplicable character, because the indifferent existence of the changeless substratum cannot alone account for it. Now, it has been found that the illusoriness and the consequent inexplicable character of the world have not been established, and even the definition of inexplicability or falsity is not tenable. Moreover, if the substratum-consciousness becomes through ignorance the object of experience, then illusion takes place, and if illusion takes place, then the said consciousness becomes the object. Thus, the falsity of an object will be proved, if the knowledge of it is illusory and the said knowledge will be proved to be illusory only if the object of knowledge is taken as false. The supposition of an inexplicable cause for the explanation of the alleged inexplicable effect, namely, the world of experience is therefore of little logical value. Besides, as the advocate holds that from scriptural knowledge which is itself illusory in character, the knowledge of the Real is produced and that from a cause, an effect which is distinct from it ("विलक्षणत्वात्") is produced, so consistently with those admissions, he cannot hold that the inexplicable effect requires an inexplicable material cause.

Cosmic Ignorance cannot be taken as the veil of self-luminous partless Brahman.

As the non-dual attributeless character of Reality has not been logically proved, so the advocate cannot be justified, for the sake of consistency with this conception of Reality, in inferring any principle having the power of veiling the undifferentiated character of that Reality and manifesting differences in it. Over and above, because the substratum is assumed to be without the distinction of the inner and the outer, all-pervading, partless, unassociated, indifferent and ever-manifest luminous consciousness, so it is illogical to imagine a veil that hides its nature. The veiling of the self-luminous is contradictory and as such cannot be conceived. It cannot be said that due to the difference of portions, such veiling of the self-luminous is possible. The portion may either mean a part of the whole or an attribute of a substance, but the self-luminous is neither a whole with parts, nor a substance with attributes. Nor can it be said that to account for its non-manifestation in its undivided and ever-full forms, the veiling of the self-luminous ought to be supposed, because in the differenceless, there is the absence of any form. If the substratum is not veiled, the difference of its forms cannot be supposed, and unless and until the difference of forms is supposed in it, the question of its veiling cannot at all arise.

Thus we find that the logical necessity for supposing the cosmic Ignorance is not substantiated.*

* In accordance with their scriptures, the advocates believe that one, illusory Power (Māyā or cosmic Ignorance) having for its substratum,—the attributeless Consciousness,—is discovered by adepts in the state of deep meditation (ध्यानयोगानुगता). Here let us show that

Cosmic Ignorance cannot be the modifying cause of the world.

Now, let us examine how this cosmic Ignorance, even if accepted as a hypothesis, can explain the diversified

the Illusory Power cannot be discovered during meditation. The said Energy is accepted by them as of the nature of a veil. Where there is merely the veil (आवरण), there cannot remain the ego, which is according to them a product of that veil. So the veil cannot be known by the ego. That is, while the cause alone is there, the effect, namely the ego, cannot exist So by the ego which is an effect, its veiling cause cannot be known. Moreover, meditation and discovery are not possible without the ego. So by meditation, the said Energy can never be known. Nor can it be supposed that by transcending the ego and being identified with the witness-consciousness, the veiling Energy is discovered, because such a state is not possible at all. Even if we imagine such a state, then also that cannot be called discovery because there is no egoistic sense or ascertainment. Nor can it be imagined that the pure witness, having intuited the Energy in that state, remembers or infers it in its wakeful state, because the witness does not admit of change of states, and intuition, remembrance and reference are not the functions of the changeless witness. Further, even if this function of witness were admitted, the difference of opinion among those who practise trance could not be explained. Thus we find that the very possibility of the direct knowledge of the veiling Power in the state of trance cannot be established, and how can it be maintained that it is actually attained? They can however argue that the existence of this Energy is necessarily implied by the state of trance. The witness, being changeless, to explain that state of trance and the awakening from it, something else distinct from the witness must be recognised to be present in the state of trance. This something, according to their view, being neither the ego nor the mind, should be regarded as nothing but that veiling capacity, with which the mind and the ego are identified. Because the effects cannot remain without the cause and because they have no independent existence apart from their material cause, the effects, viz. the ego and the mind, cannot alone remain without that cause. So it should be admitted that the veiling capacity accounts for the alleged remembrance or inference of that state. This, however, is logical argument

world. It is held that this Ignorance is the modified material cause of the universe. Here the question is : Does the said ignorance become modified by being transformed or by not being so ? If it is not transformed, then all the faults shown in the last chapter with regard to the doctrine of unmodified causality will apply here. Moreover, in this case, it will be altogether superfluous to recognise, along with the Substratum, Brahman, another causal principle which also does not admit of any transformation. It should also be noted that modification without any transformation is logically inconceivable. Nor can Ignorance be said to be the transformed cause of the universe. Because if it is regarded as partially transformed, it has to be conceived as consisting of parts, which they cannot logically admit, and in case there is its total transformation, there will be the absence of the prime cause (Ignorance) distinct from the world as an effect. To explain : As such total transformation implies the total abandonment of original nature of what is transformed, and the production of an altogether new form, the necessary conclusion would be that with the origination of the world, Ignorance has been destroyed. It would further follow that Ignorance, which is regarded as the producer of the diversities, being destroyed in the very first moment of the origination of the world, from the second moment there would be no more appearance of diversities. Not only this. Since Ignorance is considered to be the cause, not only of origination, but also of the

for and not the direct intuition of the veiling Energy, and to discover this, adepts need not take pains to practise meditation, because this can easily be done on waking from every case of dreamless sleep or swoon. Thus we find that we have practically to depend on reasoning to ascertain whether the veiling Energy is to be accepted, and not on the scriptures or intuition.

continuance of this illusory world, *the total transformation* and the consequent destruction of the nature of Ignorance at the very first moment of the creation of the illusion would lead to the immediate disappearance of this world. We have already given in many places the refutation of the doctrine of modification. So neither the causality of Ignorance which is taken as modified nor the causality of attributeless Reality accompanied by such Ignorance can be accepted as a logically self-consistent view.

Besides, the question is: Does Brahman become the ruler (अधिष्ठान) of cosmic Ignorance through its mere presence or through conscious will (ईक्षण). If the first alternative is right, then there will be modification for ever, because Brahman is ever-present. If modification is admitted as dependent on conscious will, then inasmuch as this will itself is the modification of that ignorance, that modification will require another such will and so on. Thus, there will be the fallacy of an infinite regression.

In case, the modification of Ignorance is admitted, then either it must remain naturally (स्वाभाविक) in Consciousness or conditionally (औपाधिक). It cannot be innate in Consciousness, because It is by its nature self-luminous, unrelated and non-dual. Reality which is an unrelated differenceless and non-dual, cannot have the inherent properties of being the support or of being an object or of being the illuminator of something. Nor can it be said that Ignorance conditionally exists in consciousness. If ignorance is the condition of itself, then there will be the fault of self-dependence (आत्माश्रय); if it will require any other condition, there will be interdependence; and if that condition will require another condition and so on, then there will be the fallacy of infinite regression. According to the theory under consideration, consciousness with condition

is imaginary (कल्पित); in that case being itself imaginary, if it imagines itself, then there will be the fault of self-dependence, and if another conditional reality be the cause of this imagination, then it will require another conditional reality to imagine it and thus there will be an infinite regression. And if the relation of consciousness with Ignorance is due to another Ignorance, there will be an infinite regression, because the second ignorance will require a third and so on. Moreover, we have to consider whether the alleged conditional Ignorance remains in one portion of the pure consciousness or all over it? There cannot be partial pervasion, because consciousness is without parts. Moreover, because consciousness is naturally free from parts, if any part of it be thought of, such part must be imaginary or conditional, and the cause of such imagining or conditioning must be Ignorance; so, as shown above, there will be an infinite regression. If the second alternative is granted, then there will be no differentiation of conditions. As each condition affects the whole of consciousness, it would be difficult to distinguish among the conditions.

The doctrine that the universe is the modification of Ignorance is based upon the assumption that the content of illusory experience is inexplicable in character. The advocates of the theory first of all trace the alleged Ignorance as the material cause of the inexplicable shell-silver and then finding the same characteristic of inexplicability in the world of experience consider it as the modification of the same Ignorance. Now, we have already shown that neither the perception of illusory silver nor the modification of Ignorance can be logically explained by them, as a result the attempt at inferring Ignorance as the material cause of the universe becomes baseless.

They hold that as an effect of the modification of Ignorance, an illusory object, e. g. shell-silver, is produced on the substratum, e. g. shell, and becomes the object of perception. Again, when the valid knowledge of the substratum is attained, the Ignorance in relation to it is destroyed, the negation of the illusory object in the substratum is experienced, and the object is conceived as really non-existent. Now, a question may be put to them. Is the production of the illusory object prior to or posterior to or simultaneous with its perception? If it is prior to perception, then the external existence of the object independent of perception has to be admitted, and its illusory character would be disproved. It cannot be posterior to perception, because there cannot be any contact between the sense-organ and what has not yet come into existence. It cannot also be simultaneous with the perception, because unless the object has been already present, the sense-contact cannot occur, and hence at the first or even at the second moment of its production perception is not possible. Hence the dependence of the illusory object on the perceiving subject and the inexplicable existence of the object due to the modification of Ignorance relating to the substratum, cannot be logically reconciled. Besides, according to their view, there are two kinds of knowledge,—one is the eternal witness-consciousness (स्वरूपज्ञान) in which there is no process of knowledge, and the other is phenomenal knowledge, which involves a process (वृत्तिज्ञान). This process is taken as twofold, one is the modification of the mind-stuff and the other is the modification of ignorance. Now by the consciousness alone, you cannot know the illusory silver. Without the modification produced from the sense-contact, it is not possible for the witness-consciousness to know the said silver. If it were possible, then a blind man also might get the notion of silver in the shell, and joys and

sorrows also would have been visible. Besides, by such a recognition, the remembrance of the illusory silver cannot be explained. The mental modification cannot have the form of apparent objects, which do not previously remain unknown. The shell-silver cannot be the modification of ignorance. If ignorance is empirical, it cannot modify itself into the form of apparent effects, because the modified cause and its effects must have the same essence or existence. You cannot avoid this fault by recognising ignorance as apparent, because there is no proof about such a character of ignorance. Moreover, in that case it cannot be the cause of empirical objects. Besides, modification, according to you, is but the attainment of another form of equal essence. But as ignorance is not taken as having parts or apparent, it cannot modify itself into the apparent silver.

Moreover, according to you, Ignorance cannot be treated as one. In that case, when it is once eliminated, there will be the absence of illusion. Ignorance cannot be said to be many, because it is not the object of any source of valid knowledge. Ignorance cannot be said to be different from the self, because it is not apprehended as independent. Nor can Ignorance be regarded as non-different from the self, for then it would participate in the self-luminous nature of the self and would not veil it. It is not with parts, because in that case it would become an effect. It is not partless, because then the complete elimination of it would occur by the true knowledge of any of its effects.

To conclude :—As Ignorance cannot satisfy the conditions necessary for being a cause and as the recognition of Ignorance as the modified material cause of the universe is riddled with contradictions, so Ignorance cannot logically be asserted as the cause of the universe.

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD EXAMINED.

(a) The doctrine of God as Illusory material and efficient cause represented.

The exponents of this theory derive their conception of God from their conceptions of Being-Consciousness and cosmic Ignorance. As a result of their ontological search after the ultimate Reality, they arrive at the idea of one non-dual attributeless Changeless differenceless self-luminous Consciousness, which alone is regarded as having absolute existence. Since it is necessary to explain and account for the existence and nature of the world of our phenomenal experience by reference to the ultimate Reality, they trace the origin of this world to that Consciousness as its absolute cause, material as well as efficient. But the idea of the ultimate Reality as the attributeless differenceless non-dual Consciousness is inconsistent with the idea of It as the real efficient and material cause of a real pluralistic universe. Hence they hold that this universe has only a phenomenal existence, that it illusorily appears on the substratum of Consciousness, and that there is the inexplicable cosmic ignorance, which having veiled the true nature of Consciousness, makes it appear as what we experience it to be. This ignorance and its product viz. this universe, though without any beginning in time, are not real in the sense in which that absolute Consciousness is real, and do not therefore vitiate the absolute non-duality of that ultimate Reality; but their phenomenal reality is unquestionable.

It is evident that Ignorance, apart from the Substratum, Consciousness, is meaningless and can not be regarded as the cause of the world, and it is also evident that Consciousness, in its essential attributeless changeless character,

cannot be regarded as the cause of this world. Hence to trace the cause of this world the idea of Consciousness and that of Ignorance must be taken together. Thus it is held that the attributeless changeless powerless actionless differenceless Consciousness,—which alone is the ultimate Reality,—being apparently conditioned and determined by and illusorily identified with the cosmic Ignorance, which has an inexplicable reality, but has no beginning of existence, eternally appears as God and becomes the sole absolute cause of this world. Thus, according to this view, God is the conditioned and determined Being-Consciousness, and the conditioning agent, viz. Ignorance, being only phenomenally real, God also has only a phenomenal reality, and the true knowledge of the ultimate character of Being-Consciousness will invalidate Its God-hood along with the invalidation of the world-creation. But all the powers and attributes, that are required to be supposed in the cause in order to account for the wonderfully regulated nature of this boundless diversified world, are attributed to God or the conditioned Brahman, from the phenomenal point of view. Accordingly this God is recognised as omnipotent and omniscient, all-pervading and all-transcending, the sole creator, preserver, ruler and destroyer of the objects and events of the world. God is thus the apparent self-manifestation through cosmic Ignorance, of the attributeless Consciousness, in relation to the entire world-system.

But this Consciousness has another form of self-manifestation through the same Ignorance. This cosmic ignorance modifies itself into innumerable special or individual ignorances, appearing in the forms of particular egos and minds. The same Consciousness, as conditioned and determined by and identified with these particular egos and minds, manifests itself, from the same phenomenal point of

view, as innumerable finite selves (*jeevas*). Thus God and the *jeevas* are, from the transcendental point of view, absolutely identical, because they are nothing but pure attributeless Consciousness, but from the phenomenal point of view God is the creator and ruler of the *jeevas.*

(b) The conception of God based on unestablished conclusions.

Now, the validity of this conception of God and of the finite selves is completely dependent upon the validity of conceptions of the attributeless changeless Being-Consciousness as the non-dual ultimate Reality, the world of diversities as the illusory appearance on this substratum and as having a neither-real-nor-unreal inexplicable existence, and the cosmic Ignorance as the inexplicable agency that veils the real nature of Being-Consciousness and modifying itself into various forms exhibits the diversities of the world on that substratum. In the preceding sections we have examined each of these conceptions and their implications. It has been found that each of them is beset with various logical difficulties, and none can be carried to their logical end without being entangled into inconsistencies and absurdities. This conception of God and of the finite selves follows as a matter of course from those unestablished conceptions, and hence obviously it is also far from being established.

(c) The conception of God is a hypothesis and not founded on proof.

If we analyse and reflect upon the nature of this universe of phenomenal experience, and follow the demand of the law of Causality to account for it, we are required to suppose a cause which should be sufficient to supply an adequate ground for the beginningless and endless existence

as well as the wonderfully regulated and harmonised plurality of this world. This mode of thought may lead to the conception of a cause, which must be self-existent, which must have the unrestrained and unlimited power to produce a world of plurality out of itself without any help or hindrance from any other agency, which must have the unlimited wisdom to regulate the course and determine the nature of everything in harmony with all other things, past, present and future, which must be self-conscious and by whose consciousness all things should be manifested. From the empirical point of view the conception of God is the result of this mode of thought. But unless the real existence of such God can be proved by some other means of valid knowledge, God must remain a hypothesis, but His existence will not be an established truth. We have noticed before that no such incontrovertible proof is forthcoming It is for this reason that God's nature and His relation to the world have been conceived in different ways by different schools of thought, and even among the supporters of the doctrine under consideration different views are found. They ultimately rely upon intuition and scriptures; the value of this reliance for the establishment of truth has been examined previously.

(d) Ontological and logical necessities for the recognition of God wanting.

The exponents of the theory we have been discussing, have gone further and analysed this conception of God into the conception of one absolutely real attributeless Consciousness and one apparently real Ignorance. From the standpoint of the causal argument, is there any convincing justification for this analysis? If Consciousness as conditioned and determined by Ignorance has to be recognised as the sole material and efficient cause of the world, then some un-

avoidable rational necessity has to be shown for not regarding this so-called conditioned consciousness or God as the ultimate Reality.

The necessity may be two-fold,–one logical and another ontological. The ontological demand of thought leads to the conception of one non-dual attributeless Existence as the ultimate Reality. But unless additional independent evidence can be found for establishing the existential truth of this conception, there is no bar against regarding it as a substantiation of an abstract feature of God. In course of our examination of this doctrine of attributeless Existence, we could find out no satisfactory evidence for establishing the independent real existence of this supposed attributeless Existence. The logical necessity lies in showing that if God is to be regarded as the ultimate Reality and the real material and efficient cause of the world, He is to be conceived as eternally modifying Himself into the changing plurality of the world and at the same time remaining eternally the unchanged one. This is self-contradictory, and to escape from this logical absurdity, an equally unwarrantable assumption of a unique unthinkable power in Him has to be made. The charge is of course legitimate, and we have discussed the fallacies involved in the conception of the self-modification of God in a previous chapter.

But here the question is, how do the exponents of the theory under examination gain by dividing the concrete nature of God into attributeless changeless Consciousness and cosmic Ignorance? The attributeless Consciousness can be of no help in explaining the nature of this vast complicated harmonious world of plurality, except that the existence of this world may find its support in the existence of Consciousness. All the other powers and

attributes,—viz. omnipotence, omniscience, the formation of plan and design for this wonderful cosmic order and adjustment, the creation and regulation and organisation of different, but inter-related, orders of finite beings, inorganic, organic, sentient and rational, etc.—have to be ascribed to Cosmic Ignorance. It is inconceivable how such powers and attributes can be associated with Ignorance, the conception of which is originally based upon the observation of the not-knowing of certain objects by particular finite knowing beings and the veiling of the true nature of certain substances at the time of illusion with reference to particular perceiving subjects. The ascription of such powers and attributes to Ignorance is at least no more comprehensible than the ascription of these powers and attributes to God. Thus the nature of this world of effects is not logically explained, either by regarding God as the ultimate Reality or by analysing His nature into attributeless Consciousness and Ignorance.

(e) The conclusion that Ignorance being associated with Brahman produces the world implies the abandonment of the advocates' doctrine of the ultimate Reality.

It will of course be admitted by the exponents of the theory of Ignorance that Ignorance by itself cannot possess these powers and attributes, but that being imposed upon and associated with the absolute Being-Consciousness, it becomes endowed with these incomprehensible powers and attributes. If instead of being associated with Brahman, it had been associated with any finite being, it could not of course modify itself into and make that finite being appear as such a boundless complicated world-system extending over all space and all time and with such wonderful

harmony. If this is admitted, then it must also be admitted that the cosmic Ignorance owes the limitless wonderworking powers and attributes, which are exhibited in the world-process, to the Absolute Reality, with which it is eternally associated, and that it is able to make that Reality appear in the form of such an intricate temporal and spatial world-system, because that Reality has in Its own nature the capacity and possibility to appear as such. This admission would amount to the admission that the Absolute Reality is not really attributeless and powerless, but It has eternally inherent in its nature the supreme and limitless powers and attributes, which the world-system implies. It may be added that these powers and attributes would remain eternally undifferentiated and therefore unmanifested, if Ignorance, by what may be called its own specific character and power of partially veiling and partially manifesting and diversifying the nature of the Substance upon which it is imposed, had not paved the way for their partial and gradual manifestation in the shape of the world-process. This would thus mean that Brahman is the eternal repository or embodiment of all possible powers and attributes, and the cosmic Ignorance is only the medium through which they are gradually manifested. The acceptance of this position by the exponents of the theory would amount to a great slackening of their original position with regard to the nature of Brahman and Ignorance.

But their admission may not stop here. It is recognised by them that the cosmic Ignorance does not come from outside to impose itself upon Brahman, that it has no beginning in time, that it has originally no reference to any external perceiver, that it has no existence apart from the existence of Brahman and that it eternally pertains to Its nature. What would this conception of cosmic Ignor-

ance, taken along with the previous admission, imply ? It would mean that this agency or power of veiling, differentiating and diversifying the inherent powers and attributes of Brahman and thereby manifesting them in the shape of the world-system, is not a distinct agency having separate existence, but eternally exists in and for Brahman, and may therefore not illegitimately be conceived as its nature or power or tendency of self-manifestation.

The admission of this would of course mean the abandonment of their doctrine of the ultimate Reality being attributeless Existence and of Ignorance being inexplicably associated with it, and the acceptance of God or Brahman with inexplicable power and attribute as the ultimate Reality that can be reached by Reason.

(f) The attributeless non-dual Reality though not known by any other valid source of knowledge is accepted by the advocate on the ground of faith in the scriptures and liberation.

The exponents of the theory will say that from the empirical or phenomenal point of view they have no objection to accept God as the ultimate Reality ; but still God cannot be recognised as more than the ultimate phenomenal Reality. From the transcendental point of view, however, God's complex existence must be resolved into and deduced from Pure attributeless Existence-Consciousness, which again must necessitate the supposition of the cosmic Ignorance. Therefore they must accept God without abandoning the attributeless Consciousness and Ignorance.

But the question is, what is their source of the knowledge of what they regard as the Transcendental Reality

and what is the ground of their regarding the self-diversifying power of God as Ignorance? It has been found that the non-dual attributeless changeless Being-Consciousness cannot be satisfactorily proved to have a real existence by itself, apart from its relation to what they call Ignorance or the power of self-diversification. It has been found that neither perception nor inference nor trance-experience can make such a Being its object. It has also been found that such a Being is not a pre-supposition absolutely necessitated for the explanation of the world-process. Why then are they so very earnest for establishing It and prepared for making any number of unprovable hypotheses for Its sake?

They will at last have to say in reply that their doctrine is inseparably associated with their faith in the Scriptures and their conception of *Mukti* or liberation from the world, and hence to be true to these, they must adjust the course of their logic to the proclamations of the Scriptures and the possibility of *Mukti*. The Scriptures, which are believed by them as infallible, speak of the non-dual attributeless changeless Being-Consciousness as the Absolute Reality, and this must be accepted as the foundation of all philosophical discourses. These Scriptures again have declared that by the knowledge of this Reality the finite spirit realises its absolute unity with It.

(g) Scriptural authority Unacceptable.

We have discussed the question of the validity of the Scriptures as the source of true knowledge about Reality in the earlier part of the book as well as on several other occasions. It has been found that they can in no way be regarded as an independent source of valid knowledge. Even if their validity be conceded to, the position of these non-dualists is not established. Not only do the different

Scriptures differ, but even the same Scripture speaks differently in different contexts. It is by the exercise of logical reason that the different texts of the Scriptures have to be interpreted, and for the sake of logical consistency among the different texts, sometimes meanings which are not literally conveyed by the texts are imputed to them. The exponents of this theory also do the same and also regard some texts as having superior value and strength in comparison with others. No Scriptural text, if found to be logically self-inconsistent or inconsistent with other texts, is accepted on its face value. Hence unless the non-dual attributeless Being-Consciousness as the ultimate Reality can be logically established, It cannot be accepted as such merely on the authority of any Scripture. The believers in the Scripture would rather be well-advised to interpret the texts literally conveying this sense in harmony with those texts, the validity of which can be logically substantiated.

(h) The doctrine of Mukti (liberation) represented and criticised: Mukti involves nine assumptions which are self-contradictory.

Secondly, with regard to the conception of *Mukti* or liberation, it is not the same idea of *Mukti* that is preached by all the Scriptural texts. Every system of philosophy also has its own conception of *Mukti*. The idea of the unity of the finite spirit with the Absolute Reality, conveyed in certain texts can also be differently construed. Whether the *Mukti*, referred to here, can be actually realised or experienced is also a debatable point and will be discussed hereafter.

The idea of *Mukti*, which is essentially connected with this absolute non-duality of Brahman, is that the indi-

vidual selves realise their non-difference from Brahman at the time of their attainment of *Mukti*. It is held that if the individual selves are not really non-different from Brahman, this realisation would be meaningless. But as the realisation must be accepted as valid, the individual selves must be regarded as really non-different from Brahman, and their difference from Brahman or the ultimate Reality —the ultimate Source of the world—as experienced in the worldly state of existence, must be regarded as illusory. Whatever is illusory must be due to ignorance. Therefore the experienced difference of the individual self from Brahman must be due to Ignorance. When this Ignorance is destroyed, individuality disappears and the non-dual Brahman alone remains. Now, if the world-system is real, the individuality of the selves, having particular place and function in it, cannot be illusory. Hence the real unity of the self with Brahman implies the illusoriness of the world as well. Accordingly, the world as well as the individuality and finitude of the selves must be regarded as due to Ignorance. But as this Ignorance is capable of being destroyed (for otherwise *Mukti* would be impossible), the isolated existence of Brahman apart from relation to Ignorance must be admitted. Hence on the ground of the validity of *Mukti*, as conceived by these non-dualists, the absolute non-dual attributeless powerless changeless Brahman as the ultimate Reality must be recognised, and consequently the Ignorance that makes It appear as the world must be regarded as not pertaining to the nature of Brahman, but present as an inexplicable entity capable of being destroyed. This leads to the conclusion that God must be conceived as Brahman illusorily conditioned by Ignorance and hence as possessing only an empirical—or from the stand-point of the Absolute Reality, Brahman, only an illusory—existence.

We shall deal with the question of the validity of *Mukti* afterwards. Here we note a few striking assumptions which are made for the sake of this *Mukti*. First, Brahman, the absolute Reality, is Pure Consciousness, but not self-conscious,—is self-luminous, but incapable of illumining Its own nature. Secondly, as self-luminous Being-Consciousness It is the support and witness of Ignorance, but being unacquainted with Its own true nature, It becomes subject to illusion created with regard to Its own nature by that Ignorance and looks upon Itself as a plurality of finite selves, surrounded and oppressed by a bewildering diversity of objects. Thirdly, it is under the influence of Ignorance that the self-luminous Consciousness becomes conscious of its own existence, and when It becomes so conscious, It finds Itself to be finite, relative, conditioned, and suffering from misery. Fourthly, Brahman, the Absolute Reality, though unknown to Itself as such, can be the object of knowledge to the finite-self, i. e. to Itself, when It becomes under the influence of Ignorance a finite relative individual self. Fifthly, the self also, which is identical with Brahman, does not know itself or Brahman through its own self-luminosity, but through the modification of the mind, which is a modification of Ignorance. Sixthly, Ignorance which is not destroyed, but rather sheltered, by the self-luminosity of Brahman or the Self, is capable of being destroyed by the mental cognition i. e. by a particular form of the modification of the mind, whose very existence depends upon and is sustained by Ignorance. Seventhly, for the possibility of the knowledge of Brahman and the destruction of Ignorance by the finite self and the attainment of liberation by the latter, it has also to be assumed that at the same moment of time, there must be the correlated existence of Brahman as the object of this knowledge, the finite self as

the subject, the mental modification as the process of knowledge, the mind as the instrument, Ignorance as the sustainer of the mind and the distinction between Brahman and the self. In the absence of any one of them, it is not possible for the finite self to attain the knowledge of its unity with Brahman and to attain liberation ; on the other hand, if Ignorance can co-exist with this liberating knowledge, there is no antagonism between them, and it is difficult to conceive how the one can kill the other. Eighthly, it is one Brahman that has been appearing as many individual selves, which are therefore really one, and it is one Ignorance that has modified itself into many minds related to them. If one individual self, through the right sort of the modification of one mind, attains the knowledge of non-dual Brahman, it is to be expected that the cosmic Ignorance should be destroyed, the world should be negated, and all the apparently different individual selves should be liberated. But according to this theory, it has to be assumed that the same Ignorance, though destroyed, is not destroyed, the same real self, though liberated, is not liberated. Ninthly, the self-conscious self, having attained *Mukti*, again becomes non-self-conscious pure Being, —Brahman—and therefore again liable to be conditioned by Ignorance and to fall into bondage.

Thus, it is found that in order to stick to their conception of *Mukti*, they have to make so many self-contradictory assumptions. How then can this conception of *Mukti*, be the basis of the conception of the ultimate Reality ? Hence it is evident that in no way can the exponents of this theory establish the attributeless changeless powerless knowledgeless pure Being-Consciousness or Brahman, as the ultimate self-existent Reality and as the ground and substance of the world, nor can they point out

any independent evidence for the neither-real-nor-unreal existence of Ignorance, which is eternally associated with Brahman, but still destructible by phenomenal knowledge of Brahman. Accordingly, their conception of God as the transcendentally real Being-Consciousness apparently conditioned by the neither-real-nor-unreal Ignorance, does not stand on any solid foundation, and the idea that this God is an empirical Reality, capable of being transcended by the knowledge of the absolute Reality, viz. attributeless Brahman, is not rationally established.

Godhood and selfhood further Examined.

With regard to the question of the validity of the conception of God and the individual selves of this school of thought, some other objections also may be raised from its own point of view, and we refer to them below.

They hold that one non-dual attributeless witness-consciousness, being conditioned by Ignorance becomes identified with the sum-total of conditions (समष्टि उपाधि), produced from it, and thus appears as God, and by being identified with particular sets of conditions (व्यष्टि उपाधि) appears as finite selves ('Jiva'). Now let us examine these conclusions.

Let us first consider how owing to the existence of Ignorance, Brahman may appear as one God and a plurality of finite selves. If Ignorance is either only one or many, then in both cases there will be no God as distinguished from individval *Jeevas*. To explain, if the first view is accepted, then because of the relation of one undivided consciousness with one and only one Ignorance, there will only be one 'jiva' and other so-called living beings will be mere phantoms (जीवाभास). If Ignorance is distinct and many, then due to the relation of those Ignorances to one consci-

ousness, there will only be different individuals and no God. If in the principle of Ignorance there is the conception of an aggregate which is considered as made up of parts, then due to the relation of Consciousness to the parts as well as to the aggregate, there will be both individuality (जीवत्व) and Godhood simultaneously.

Now, let us show that the oneness and manifoldness of Ignorance cannot be ascertained and therefore the nature of God and individual living beings remains undetermined. We have here to examine the capacity of our finite understanding to come to any definite conclusion with regard to the unity or manifoldness of Ignorance, and thereby to form a definite estimate of the validity of the conceptions of God and finite spirits.

The living being considered in its subjective aspect is constituted of the gross body, the sense-organs, the mind-stuff, the power of activity, the modification of Ignorance, and the witness-consciousness. Now let us see if by any of these, we can know the number of Ignorance.

The oneness or manifoldness of Ignorance cannot be ascertained by the self-luminous witness, because it is without any activity. To ascertain the number of a thing, the knowledge of its various members is needed. Because the witness-self is without modification, there cannot occur in it such knowledge. Hence by the witness-consciousness, the number of Ignorance cannot be settled. Also in order to count the number-two, the number-one should be kept in remembrance. So where there is no modification in the form of remembrance, there cannot be the knowledge of the number. Because the witness-consciousness is one uniform, eternal luminosity, it cannot be destroyed or lost, so no impression can be produced by the destruction of

that consciousness ; hence there cannot be the remembrance by the awakening of that impression. Moreover, without the relation of the ego, remembrance cannot be possible. In order to have remembrance, the knowledge of the unity of both previous and later egos is necessary. But in the witness-consciousness, there is no egoistic sense. Because what makes possible the knowledge of numbers namely—antecedent and subsequent time, succession, continuity, egoism, remembrance—is not possible in the consciousness which is without modification and beyond mind, therefore the number of Ignorance cannot be determined by the witness-consciousness. Though Ignorance is taken as being witnessed by that consciousness, still it cannot be asserted that its oneness and manifoldness can be known by that witness, just as the positive and negative characters of ignorance, they say, remain unknown to the witness.

By mind also the number of ignorance cannot be fixed, because ignorance is not the object of the mind-stuff. When in dreamless sleep, all knowledge produced through instruments sinks, even then ignorance is taken as known. So its knowledge does not depend upon produced cognitions which are only the modifications of the mind-stuff. Besides, that which becomes the object of mind can be determined as one or many, so mind is the cause of the knowledge of number. But as ignorance is not cognizable by mind, so its number cannot be determined. Also, the mental modification called knowledge is contradictory to ignorance. At the rise of knowledge the ignorance relating to respective things is not apprehended. When there is ignorance about something, at that time there cannot be knowledge about that object in the form of a mental modification. At the time of the experience of ignorance, the absence of the valid cognition which drives out ignorance must be recog-

nised, otherwise there would not have been the experience of ignorance. The mental modification, called knowledge, is not the destroyer of ignorance, but it is of the nature of the destruction of ignorance. In order to destroy ignorance which is of the nature of the veil, it is necessary that something should be produced which is of the nature of its destruction or which is of the form of its destroyer. The modification of mind called knowledge is not the destroyer of ignorance, because what is the cause of its destruction should remain immediately before its destruction. But the mental modification called knowledge which is produced about some object does not remain immediately before the destruction of ignorance of that object. Hence the mental modification is not the destroyer of ignorance, but it is of the nature of the destruction of ignorance. Because at the moment, when the reference of ignorance is felt, the said mental modification does not exist, so the said modification will be of the nature of destruction of ignorance. Thus it is shown that ignorance cannot be known by mental modification. Because it is not known by mental modification, so its number cannot be ascertained by that. If at first, there be the production of mental modification and then there be the destruction of ignorance, then ignorance would become known for sometime after the production of that mental modification. If the mental modification could make ignorance its object, then there would have been the simultaneous experience of both knowledge and ignorance. But in one object there cannot be the experience of simultaneous awareness and unawareness. If ignorance would become objectified by mental modification, then there would be no contradiction between ignorance and that modification, and no possibility of the destruction of ignorance by knowledge. Moreover, mental modification drives out the unknownness of an object; that which is not felt to

have been unknown cannot be an object of knowledge through mental modification. Since it is through ignorance that objects become unknown, the unknownness of ignorance itself cannot be admitted. The unknownness of ignorance being not possible, it cannot be known by mental modification whose function is to drive out unknownness. Thus by mental modification the oneness or manifoldness of ignorance cannot be known. If two entities are contradictory, the presence of the one implies the absence of the other; so the number of the one cannot be determined by the other. Ignorance and mental modification, being contradictory in character like darkness and intense light, the ascertainment of the number of the former through the latter is impossible.

By sense-organs also, the number of ignorance cannot be counted. Senses take as their objects external things with colour etc. But ignorance has no colour etc. and it is not a gross external object. At the time when sense-organs cease to act, then also ignorance is felt as in the case of dreamless sleep. Moreover, the ascertainment of number is not the function of sense-organs. If ignorance were the object of the senses, then there would have been no controversy about its being positive or negative, one or many. By the action of vital airs also, the number of ignorance cannot be ascertained. The work of ascertainment is done by the power of knowledge and the vital airs have no such power. In dreamless sleep the vital airs work, but still there is no knowledge of things. It is needless to state that by the gross body and the organs of action also, the number of ignorance cannot be ascertained.

The modification of ignorance itself cannot be the source of the knowledge of the number of ignorance. If the modification of ignorance could produce such know-

ledge, then even in the state of dreamless sleep, there would arise due to such modification the awareness of the distinction of the subject and the object, or of the knower and the known, and the result would be the breach or the virtual absence of dreamless sleep. Moreover, the modification of ignorance is not separate from ignorance. Being itself ignorance, it cannot be the object of its own knowledge and hence it cannot ascertain its own number Thus the modification of ignorance will not be of any avail in the ascertainment of its number.

There is no other means to ascertain the number of Ignorance. Hence it is proved that whether Ignorance is one or many or one having many parts can never be ascertained. In short, because Ignorance is the object of the inactive witness-consciousness and is not the object of the mental modification, its number will ever remain unknown.

Now, it may be assumed that a more powerful person can know the number of Ignorance and determine the nature of God. But this is impossible, because all capacities belong to the mind. And in the case of the ascertainment of the number of Ignorance, greater power will not count, that is, where mind cannot reach, mind's greater power has nothing to do. Moreover, if any one's mind can know ignorance and through its knowledge can ascertain its number and through that ascertainment arrive at a sure conclusion about Godhood, then it has to be admitted that the mental modification of that person does not drive out ignorance and unawareness due to it. So there will be no valid cognition on the part of that person and his living on this earth will be a difficult affair. Hence because the number of Ignorance cannot be ascertained, Godhood and Individuality (जीवत्व) based on that ascertainment can never be validated. It is for this reason that we find various

divergent theories about God and individual self among the upholders of the said theory. These are conjectures or guesses and are products of faith and not of knowledge.

Thus, having examined from all points of view the doctrine of God as the illusory material and efficient cause of the world, we find no solid rational foundation on which it can safely stand.

APPENDIX F.

Occidental Theories.

I

" If the only being that can properly be said to be " Substance " is God, we must remove from finite things their seeming substantiality. Spinoza therefore denies the independent reality of matter and mind...Spinoza, however, is finally forced to admit that *in itself* the Infinite Being is not distinguished as thinking and extended ; in other words, he virtually abolishes the distinction between thought and extension—with the result that the Infinite cannot be characterised as either thinking or extended. Thus by an inevitable logic the Infinite is reduced to pure being. And as Spinoza holds that, strictly speaking, only the infinite is, the finite disappears and nothing knowable or even thinkable remains.

...In Spinoza, then, the finite is merely the infinite as it appears to the imagination. The difficulty in this doctrine is, that the infinite as purely continuous being admits of no determination, and therefore it becomes for us an absolute blank. If all determinations of extension are fictions of the imagination, obviously these have no reality whatever from the point of view of the whole. Moreover, though they may be, they are not non-entities ; they have at least the reality of fictions, and therefore need explanation. How should fictions arise if reality excludes them ? If thought is in its real nature continuous, why should it appear as broken up into separate ideas ? Appearance is ; why should it be, if only reality is. Spinoza starts from the ordinary separation of finite things and finite minds from one another. This separation, however, as he maintains, is a fiction of abstraction, which disappears when we see that there is only one continuous extension and one continuous thought. But

Spinoza forgets to reconstruct the basis from which he started. If in reality there is only one extension and one thought, the fiction of a number of things and a number of minds is inexplicable. That which has no reality, from an absolute point of view does not exist: why then should it be supposed to exist? We can understand how, in a world which is in process, there may be fictions due to the limitations of our knowledge; but in a world where there is no process, and no limitation of any kind, fiction is something quite inexplicable. The finite in other words cannot possibly be explained by a theory which excludes it from the infinite... The purely affirmative infinite of Spinoza, as excluding all determination, converts the finite into an inexplicable illusion.*

Another difficulty which besets the doctrine of Spinoza is that it makes the human mind a mode of thought, and yet endows it with the power of knowing itself as well as the extension which is its opposite. But if the human mind is only a fiction due to the imagination, how can this fiction, this non-entity, have any knowledge whatever? Spinoza has forgotten that in reality there is no human mind, but only the divine mind, and that in the divine mind there is no fiction. To suppose that the divine mind is infected by negation—and fiction is negation for Spionza—is to contradict the infinity which Spinoza ascribes to it. But even if it is admitted that there is a human mind, how can it possibly comprehend the divine mind? The human mind at the most is a mode of the one infinite thought, and as such it cannot be co-extensive with infinite thought. How can a

* "In one point of view the transition from the infinite to the finite is barred for Spinoza, as it was for the Kabbalists, by the idea of God with which he starts. If we interpret that idea by his own principle that "all determination is negation" what it means for him is the absolutely indeterminate, the bare affirmation of Being which is reached by abstracting from all determinations."

(John Caird's "Spinoza")

mind which is finite, *i.e.* is confined within a limited circle, get beyond itself so as to embrace the infinite, *i. e.* to transcend its own limits? To do so it must itself be infinite. And even if we grant that the human mind can comprehend the infinite, how can it comprehend infinite extension? Extension is assumed to be beyond the mind, and therefore it cannot enter into the mind. If indeed extension and thought were not held to be reciprocally exclusive, one could understand how thought might comprehend extension; but its comprehension is inexplicable if they are absolute opposites. Assume that extension lies beyond the mind, and there is no possibility of explaining how it should ever get inside the mind. Nor can we escape from this difficulty by saying that from the point of view of God there is no opposition between extension and thought; for in that case the opposition must be a fiction, like the fiction of finite things and finite minds. If, however, the only reality is God, how should there exist such an inexplicable fiction?"

(J. Watson's Expository Notes on the Philosophy of Kant.)

II

"Spencer's argument, in brief, seems something like this: Ultimate Reality is unknown and unknowable to us. But since no knowledge is possible except upon its assumption, it must be said that there exists an unconditioned something, and that this unconditioned something is in some way manifested to us. Our concept of the Unknowable is not purely negative. It could not be a nothing, for in that case it could have no relation to our experience; and that which remains for ever inscrutable makes experience possible by underlying it. Our knowledge of a thing comes to us through the relations which obtain among its parts. But the Unknowable, as a vague and indefinite something, though it is assured to us as positively "there" is not in any known way related to our experience. Yet we must think

of it as the condition of experience. Since its relations to our knowledge are not such as can be known to us, we cannot think of it as "such or such—as of this or that kind." It is therefore unclassifiable; and, for Spencer, what cannot be grouped or aggregated cannot be known, since knowing implies grouping. The Unknowable persists in our consciousness, and is the ultimate in the sense of that which persists absolutely.......

There is, first, the psychological phase of the argument, in which the Unknowable as an ontological reality is assured existence by what is found in consciousness. Second, there is the logical phase in which an attempt is made to establish the Unknowable as a condition of knowledge, through an analysis of the structure of knowledge. Both these lines of argument are, as it seems to me, defective...I shall show that the first does not apply at all to the problem, and that the second defeats itself when carried far enough to satisfy psychological demands....

(**Psychological**)—Whatever may be the character of psychological analysis, or of its results, it does not determine or 'find' objects. The object as such has no dependence upon analysis, whatever may be its relation to the purpose to analyse. So far as analysis is concerned, the object is 'there', 'given'. The purpose and the object meet face to face, and significance accrues to analysis as the instrument by which the purpose works itself out in its relations to the object. As an instrument, it has nothing to do with what is to be found in consciousness except at the beck and call of attention. So the subjective Unknowable, for which Spencer manifests so much psychological concern, has nothing to justify it from this quarter. Whether the Unknowable is justified as a logical matter, and what part analysis plays with it as such, will receive consideration in connection with the examination of Spencer's doctrine of relativity.

Two other difficulties ought to be mentioned in connection with the subjective or internal Unknowable. As justified by what is found in consciousness, the Unknowable would seem to have no more command over our theoretical respect than the fixed idea of the insane, or the emotional vacuity that occupies the mind of the devotee of art, or the monstrosity which possesses the mind of the mystic. In either case something is 'there' with such a vengeance as to vitiate any attempts that may be made towards rational description. And the Unknowable is just such a psychological zero as, when recognized at all, negates the whole system of human knowledge, and hands the world over to chaos. We cease thinking when we contemplate it. Again, if it had any logic force at all, Spencer's argument for the Unknowable is an imperfect form of the Cartesian 'ontological proof,' consideration of which has certainly been made for ever unnecessary by the criticism of Kant.

There seems little reason or justification for the ultimate which just doggedly persists in consciousness, and there is also no conceivable function which such a cumberground could perform in experience. The internal ultimate of Spencer is neither an Unknowable nor an Absolute—not an Unknowable, because the result of the process by which it is supposed to be found could only be a fact of the same order as any of the facts with which the psychological analysis begins, and therefore known as well as any of those facts; and not an Absolute, because, first, as a particular fact in experience it has no more universal value than any other fact of experience, and hence does not constitute, but only suggests universal connection; and second, as a mere psychic fact it has no points of connection with the objective system of things, and consequently does not transcend the private consciousness of the individual. The psychological argument does not apply at all to the question of the Absolute. ...

(**Logical**)—The relative is known, the Absolute unknown; yet the Absolute exists in order that the relative may be known. In order that that which is known may be known, an unknown is postulated; thus a contradiction is introduced into the doctrine of knowledge in order to save the principle that correlatives imply one another. One wonders what becomes of this principle when the doctrine of knowledge itself makes knowledge impossible...Knowledge of the Absolute, even, is not knowledge except it is relative; so if it were established that the Absolute exists, the knowledge which establishes it with sufficient firmness that we may say it exists, is also relative knowledge, and the Absolute is swamped in relativity. Thus the independent Absolute becomes relative and dependent in the very process of establishing its independence; and this ought to be a hint that the conditions of knowledge cannot lie outside knowledge—at least cannot lie outside the knowable—if those conditions are in any way to help in understanding the process or the product of knowledge. The Unknowable—how nonsensical the whole matter is when the term is substituted for the Absolute, as Spencer would permit us to do—cannot be sifted out from the knowable by any process of separation....In opposition to this negative method I should propose that abstract analysis does not *find things* as the ground rock of reality, but that it does *disclose an act* which is of the distinctive character of the reality which underlies thinking and the world, but does the latter only when it allies itself with synthesis or becomes constructive of the concrete....The Unknowable, as a presupposed necessary condition of thought, when regarded as independent of the concrete activities of thought, and discovered by the method of abstract analysis, is shown impossible by the very process which attempts to justify its assumption. From abstraction only abstractions can come. If we can abstract from the conditions of knowledge, we can say that no knowledge remains, but we certainly cannot say that an Unknowable

something remains. If anything remains we cannot call it an Unknowable. Mere want of knowledge does not constitute the Unknowable. For if the thing has no relations to knowledge, if it lies outside the conditions of knowledge, it cannot be defined in terms of knowledge, not even negatively ; the term or any term which has even a hint of connection with a knowing subject, represents something which is *in so far* known.

That the Unknowable described by Spencer is from the start a presupposition is proved by the fact that he employs analysis to establish it. For, if the Unknowable were self-evident in thought, his laborious argument for it would be unnecessary. If it is not self-evident, but yet justifiable by characters to be found in valid thinking, the argument would take the form of a development through concepts generally recognised as valid. That is, the argument would be constructive upon certain commonly recognised conceptions, and not destructive and neglectful of characters found as concrete in experience. The Unknowable is not found in or by means of the concrete in experience, but is proved to be behind, or to underlie, experience as an unknown cause. What is found beneath or behind experience cannot be justified by what is in or of experience, that is, what is external to experience is a baseless presupposition, made use of in this case to force the concrete facts into forms which are the creatures of a narrow purpose. Reality could not be successive and disparate impressions of force if the Absolute were a principle active in experience ; physics could not be the basis of all knowledge if the Absolute were an intelligible principle within the world instead of a mechanical principle beneath and outside the world; consciousness could not be an aggregate of sensations if there were evidence of constructive purpose ; *ergo*, the Absolute is an Unknown Cause and Inscrutable Power. As was suggested above, analysis pure and simple can apply only to a concept held as a presupposition ; the analytic purpose

cannot be employed in the development of a valid concept. Analysis may prepare the way for the construction of a principle by the enumeration of concrete characters, but it cannot choose among them, cannot decide that such and such characters by nature belong together. It cannot compare. It is the principle or instrument of the sciences because its application is mathematical. Analysis enumerates the particular contents of a concept; it finds the many and sets them apart so that their fitness together may be examined, but it does not perform the examination. It attends to the terms, but not to their interrelations; hence can provide for no more significant combination than the quantitative. Until thought goes beyond the enumertive interest it has no right to claim validity for its concepts, but must take their significance and application for granted, since to determine the limits of the application of concepts is critically to judge of their development and construction. And the latter is not an analytic process, but constructive, since its concern is with relations, and to be concerned with relations is to create relations whose activity is systematizing with respect to the relations attended to. To analyse a concept is to brand that concept a presupposition, to justify a concept is a formative act, going from the given content and by means of it to a connection which transcends that content and provides for the validity of the concept by establishing its fitness within the system of experience.

......In any case the relativity of knowledge, taken in the sense in which Spencer employs it even, that is, in the sense of the incompleteness of knowledge with the further assertion that knowledge can never be complete, does not prove the existence of anything beyond the limits of knowledge. To assert the independent cause here is equivalent to drawing a positive conclusion from negative premisses. We can assert nothing as the real on the strength of premisses which express only our ignorance. Reference is here made to the independent cause only for the purpose of

showing that the relativity of knowledge has nothing to do with that cause.......

Taking Spencer's conclusions and agreeing perfectly that such conclusions follow from examination of the facts of experience, it can be shown that their significance points in precisely the opposite direction to that in which they lead Spencer; that they point to an Absolute, which, however, is by no means unknowable nor independent of human experience. This positive Absolute makes no claim to objective reality, if objective means external to knowledge, but has its reality as the distinctive character of human experience as such. The general conclusion, All knowledge is relative, is based on the further propositions, Relation is the universal form of thought and Thinking is relationing. So far as these propositions are valid, they assume relatively to mean no more and no less than interrelatedness of all forms of conscious experience. And this provides for the significance of the principle that correlatives imply one another, and destroys the psychological doctrine that there can be a consciousness which is 'residuary' and known only by the fact that it is 'there'. The analysis of thought (when complete, that is, when it passes over into construction) shows that there is no determination of thought which is not dependent upon some other determination, in the sense that each form has a reference to some other form, which reference between terms is nothing less than the act of knowing. That the references or relations are the characteristic acts of knowing is well stated by Spencer in the assertion that 'thinking' is 'relationing,' and this conception of thought as a synthetic action ought to have shown Spencer that the adequate description is a constructive performance, and not one which pricks and pries its object into assumed elements. But this notion of relatedness destroys itself when conceived as a series to which there must be a definable final term. Such a demand abandons the relational conception altogether, since it tries to think a term which is indepen-

dent of the relations that determined it as a term of the series. After declaring the terms to be nothing apart from their relations, it is attempted to construct a term which explains the series without reference to the relations, which determine the terms and at the same time give continuity to the series. Such building of toy houses only to knock them down again is characteristic of Spencer's whole discussion; instead of a conception which would provide for permanence and solidity, he sets up an Unknowable which makes the whole structure fall apart. There is no more potency in a final term as a criterion of explanation for such a connected series than there is in any other terms of series. Any term by itself has already been declared impossible for thought. The key to the explicableness of the world does not lie in the vacuum left after that which constitutes knowledge is stripped away, but is found in the principle of the construction of knowledge, which was well stated in the proposition that thinking is relationing.

It is strange that the investigation which leads to the conception of the knowledge process as one of the formation of relations does not realise that it is connectedness which is characteristic of that process and that the facts of knowledge are intelligible only as they are conceived as hanging together. It is generally admitted that facts of experience are found in complexes representing various degrees of interdependence, but the question is at this point whether these facts are to be accounted for or described. Those who attempt to account for the facts begin by separating them into their component elements, and seek by this method to discover through their relations other facts antecedent to them, which may be looked upon as causes. Their curiosity is satisfied when an experience is referred to a previous experience, as if the whole were completely formed and static, and there were nothing to do in any case but thus to trace references backwards to a world assumed as complete. Such an attitude is certainly indicative of a dualism of thought.

and things which is contradicted by the principle of relation proposed as the guiding notion and avowedly held by Spencer as the key to the intelligibility of experience. It is difficult to see how Spencer would make philosophy the capstone of the sciences, since the method followed by him is certainly not recognised nor followed by scientists. The latter do not feel themselves obliged to explain the facts with which they deal by referring them to an ultimate outside the order to which those facts belong. In fact the scientist is not looking for ultimates at all, even though he may leave evidence that a universal is readily found. Physics is not seeking the ultimate nature of body, force, etc., but is striving to give the most comprehensive description possible of the significance of those conceptions for experience, and is certainly not attempting to brand them as utterly unintelligible by thrusting them out of world. On the contrary, it is the method of science to describe what it finds and as it finds it, and to correlate its results with results already obtained. There is no attempt to mutilate the facts in the hope of finding an indeterminate substratum which produces them ; for such a 'cause' when found only enshrouds the situation in darkness. And the philosophy which progresses profits by the example of science, it takes its material as it occurs 'in nature' and attempts to give the description which is most satisfying, and at the same time offers most promise as an instrument for dealing with material which is as yet only possible. This subject-matter is experience in its concrete aspects, and the purpose of philosophy is to find the laws within it which render its constitution intelligible.

Spencer's conception of knowing as relating denies to analysis the right to recognition as a means of investigation, since such a conception can be reached by no other than a constructive process. Abstraction, it may be argued, is never used with such rigor as is here described, and this may be admitted ; but when the results reached are in point of

abstractness so far removed from the concrete as the Unknown of Spencer, it is necessary to show that the method is no legitimate one. This has already been shown by the criticism of his results. Analysis pure and simple is impossible as an act of thought, if knowing is relationing. And the conclusion which follows is that whenever analysis is at work there goes hand in hand with it a process of synthesis which not only guarantees the results but at the same time justifies the method by the results. It is often forgotten that, whenever in thought things are set apart, there are at the same time and by the same act relations established between the things put asunder. Everything abstracted from gets by the act of abstraction a determination applied to it, so that differentiation even is a tie that builds. The fact that different aspects of an experience are distinguishable, is an evidence that they by nature belong together, and it is the fact of their occurrence together which provides the possibility of their being distinguished ; further, there could be no purpose in making the distinction if there were not a conceived positive relation present as the reason which suggests the distinction. When I deny one relation, I assert another ; in fact, my denial is a positive relation seen to exist within the present experience situation. It is, then, evident that the act of thinking is not so much one of making distinctions as of going forward in a constructive fashion upon the basis of the suggestion afforded by observed differences. It is, thus, a synthetic activity, and one which provides for unity and intelligibility in the world of experience, in so far, at least, as our concern with experience is theoretical."*

(E. Jordon's " The Unknowable of Herbert Spencer "–Philosophical Review, May 1911.)

* " In my article on "Spencer's Unknowable" I was not concerned so much with the *value* or usefulness of the fundamental principles for the special sciences, as with the logical consistency of the prin-

ciples themselves and with the logical method employed in establishing them. In that article I maintained that the Unknowable is an illegitimate conception ; that it is not negligible because of the fact that it vitiates other results reached by the method which Spencer employs to establish it; that that method is faulty in both its psychological and logical aspects. I attempted to show that, by following Spencer's method in its psychological aspect, any psychic fact may be elevated to the dignity of a 'principle'; and by following the methods in its logical application—in Spencer's argument for the relativity of knowledge—it is found to require supplementation. Under this completed form of the method, 'relativity,' instead of establishing an ultimate unknowable *relatum*, turns out to be the principle of interrelatedness or systematic connectedness of all reality; and with this as a completed principle, the Unknowable would have to be regarded as the negative factor which postulates a universal scepticism."

(The Philosophical Review—May, 1912).

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAW OF KARMA EXAMINED.

Introduction.

In the First Book, we pointed out that there are three main conceptions of God—(1) God as the efficient cause of the world, (2) God as both the efficient and material cause of the world and (3) God as the illusory material and efficient cause of the world. There we have exposed in brief the modes of argumentation, by which the different schools of thought have been led to these three different conceptions.*

* In Religio-Philosophical systems of India we find three views about the production of the world : one view accepts the theory of absolute origination (आरम्भवाद), the other recognises the theory of modification (परिणामवाद), the third admits the theory of illusory manifestation (विवर्तवाद). According to the first view, four kinds of atoms viz. the earthy, watery, fiery and aerial atoms originate or cause to begin the world gradually through the dual atoms, triple atoms etc.; what was non-existent is produced through the function of the agent. This is what the Naiyayika-Vaisheṣika-Mimāmsakas recognise. The atomic theory is accepted also by the Chārvākas, Jains and some schools of the Buddhists The Sānkhyas, the Pātanjals, the Pāshupat-Shaivas and the Mādva-Vaiṣnavas do not accept the theory of atoms as the material cause of the world. According to them, the Energy called *Prakriti* constituted of three *Gunas* modifies itself as the world through the grades of Intelligence, Ego etc. According to this view, being comes from being and not non-being from being Hence the effect is existent always. Thus production does not mean the creation of the non-existent nor does destruction mean the annihilation of the existent, but they mean respectively the manifestation and non-manifestation of the effect-state in the existing substratum (cause). So the effect is an aspect or mode of the cause. It is identical with its cause in so far as its essence is concerned. According to other schools of the Vaiṣnavas and Shaivas, the world.

In the second, third, fourth and fifth chapters of this Book, the validity of those arguments has been examined in details and it has been found that none of these three main conceptions of God stand on unassailable logical grounds. Thus, up to this time, in the Second Book, two of the generally recognised fundamentals of Religion,

is the modification or qualification of Brahman, the non-dual cosmic consciousness. According to these views, the material cause of the world is not atom, nor unregulated *Prakriti*, nor *Prakriti* regulated by an external Agent, but the world is the real manifestation of the non-dual conscious Reality having *Prakriti* as His Energy (different as well as non-different) or as His attribute (absolutely different). The Non-dualistic School of Vedānta is of opinion that self-luminous non-dual attributeless Brahman through the inexplicable or unreal Energy (Māyā) is imagined or super-imposed in the form of the world because it is the substratum of all the illusory manifestations.

These systems may be divided into two classes viz. atheistic and theistic. The Chārvākas, the Pūrva Mīmāmsakas, the Sānkhyas, the Jains and the Buddhists do not recognise the existence of God. Among theists there are seven conceptions about the nature of God :— (1) the Pātanjals recognise God as an indifferent Person and hence He is not the cause of the world; (2) the Naiyāyika-Vaisheșikas accept God as an Agent of the effect-world and atoms as the material cause (as many threads cause one cloth). They infer God on the analogy of potter as the efficient cause of pot; (3) the Pāshupat-Shaivas and Mādva-Vaișnavas look upon God as an Agent regulating the actions of modifying *Prakriti*, the Unmanifested Energy (as one earth modifies into many effects such as pot etc), (4) Bhāskara, Nimbārka, Chaitanya and Vallabha regard Brahman (the non-dual self-conscious Reality) with *Prakriti* His Energy (different and non-different) as the modifying cause of the world on the analogy of *Jeeva* who causes joy, sorrow and the like in himself; (5) the Vir-Shaiva, Srikantha-Shaiva and Rāmānuja-Vaișnavas are of opinion that Brahman becomes qualified with . conscious and unconscious beings (and not modified) and these unconscious (modifications of *Prakriti*) and conscious beings though different from Brahman become inseparably related to Him. This conclusion is accepted on the analogy of the self which though qualified with the different states of boyhood, youth

namely the belief in the validity of the scriptures and *the* faith in God, have been shown to be logically unestablished. Now let us proceed to examine the other assumptions involved in some way or other in most of the great religious systems of the world. We start with a criticism of the *Law of Karma.*

I

Law of Karma indeterminable.

Let us consider the difficulties in the way of determining the *Law of Karma.* In order to ascertain a law, facts should be observed. If we find that certain events happen in a uniform manner and there is no exception to this uniformity, then those events can be subsumed under a law. Thus, a law is inferred (and not perceived) from the observation of uniformity among facts. So in the present case to ascertain the *Law of Karma*, we have to

does not become modified into these states; (6) the non-dualistic school of Vedānta (Shānkarites) acknowledges God as the unmodified substratum of the world with an inexplicable (unreal) cosmic Energy called Māyā (Ignorance) as the modifying material cause. They accept the analogy of a dreamer who illusorily manifests the illusory dream-world; (7) the Pratyavijnā and Śākta-tantra do not acknowledge God as being modified or illusorily manifested as the world, but regard the world as the manifestation of the Supreme Self due to His independent Will. They take the analogy of the manifestation in imagination of fancied towns and the like (which are regarded by them as not real or false) which are of the nature of reflection (not differentiated from its support) owing their existence to the independence of will of the knower. (See also foot-note in pages 80-81). However, in this work we have divided 6 conceptions of the causal principle (God) into three: No. 2, 3 we named as the efficient cause of the world, No. 4, 5, 7 we designated as the material and efficient cause and No. 6 we called the illusory material and efficient cause of the world.

examine relevant facts. If we find that the person who performs virtuous actions invariably enjoys happiness and the person who commits vicious deeds invariably suffers pain, and that the doer of good acts does not suffer pain nor does the doer of bad acts enjoy happiness, then only can we establish the cause-effect-relation between virtuous deeds and happiness and that between vice and sorrow. But this we do not always experience. Virtuous persons are not unoften found to suffer and wicked persons are found to enjoy. Besides, the *Law of Karma* demands also that the result accuring from any action should be enjoyed or suffered by the very same person who performs it. But we do not find it always to be the case. Often we experience that many virtuous persons suffer miseries on account of the wicked deeds of one or a few vicious men or on account of natural calamities for which they are in no way responsible. Similarly vicious men are found to enjoy the benefits of the good actions of good men. Hence, the uniformities of the kind necessary for establishing the *Law of Karma* being unavailable in our experience, the Law cannot be regarded as based on logical grounds.

Advocate.—The absence of harmony that we observe between the virtuous and vicious actions performed by the individuals in this life and their present enjoyments and sufferings cannot be put forward as a contradiction to the *Law of Karma*, because the life of an individual does not begin with the birth of the present gross body nor does it end with the destruction of this gross body. We cannot notice the beginning of the existence of the individual soul nor its end. Every individual soul passes through many states of existence, some with gross bodies and some with subtle bodies. Though we actually observe the continuity of the existence of an individual only from the birth to the

death of a particular gross body, the life of an individual has in reality a continuity throughout all these states of existence. The operation of the *Law of Karma* has to be understood by reference to the individual's entire span of life. Many actions of the past states of existence may bear fruits in this life, and many actions performed in the present life may be incapable of producing their respective consequences within the life-time of this gross body on account of the stronger powers of the effects of the actions performed in previous states of existence. They will fructify in future lives. With regard to cases of the enjoyments or sufferings of men on account of the actions of others, it is to be known that only those persons are beneficially or injuriously affected in this way, who deserve them on account of their own past deeds. Thus the apparent inconsistencies between actions and their immediate results upon the doer may be easily accounted for, if this life before the birth and after the death of the present body is taken into consideration.

Critic.—This argument of the exponent of the theory takes for granted the very law which has to be proved. For the establishment of the *Law of Karma* it has to be definitely proved that joys and sorrows of individual beings are regulated according to their respective virtuous and vicious actions. If this law were established beforehand on the strength of an overwhelming mass of evidence supplied by experience, then only could we reasonably attempt to explain the other facts, which appear to be inconsistent with the Law, by making certain assumptions, which might remove the inconsistency. In the present case, the *Law of Karma*, the existence of the permanent individual soul, the plurality of the lives of the same soul and the bond of connection among them, the possibility of

virtuous and vicious actions in all these states of existence,—all these are assumptions and none of them is independently proved. These assumptions are resorted to as supplying evidence in favour of one another. This cannot certainly be accepted as sound logic.

Advocate.—The *Law of Karma*, though an assumption, is a necessary assumption, demanded by our reason. The Law of Causality or Sufficient Ground is a fundamental law of our thought, and the *Law of Karma* is a special application of this fundamental law to the world of living beings, and particularly to human destinies. The enjoyments and sufferings of men are evidently of the nature of effects, and there must be adequate causes for producing them. They must be explained either by reference to their actually observable antecedents, or, if these antecedents are found inadequate to account for the effects, some unseen causes must be assumed. Now, it is a matter of general experience that on many occasions the observed antecedents are found to be the same, but the effects produced upon different men are different, and that in many cases such events affecting the destinies of men and animals are found to occur as cannot be explained in accordance with the law of phenomenal causation. The incidents of these kinds are either to be regarded as products of *'chance'* and thus violations of the universally accepted Law of Causation, or the presence of some unseen causes must be admitted to account for them. Every rational mind must accept the latter alternative. It cannot be said that the assumption of unobserved and unobservable causes is unwarrantable, because no man can have the presumption to assert that whatever exists must be an object of sense-perception. We are rationally compelled to admit the existence of invisible causes to account for visible effects, when visible

causes cannot adequately account for them. The incidents of the kinds referred to above can be explained satisfactorily, if we recognise the unmanifested effects of the previous actions of the persons or animals concerned, existing somehow in a subtle invisible state and being conjoined with the present visible circumstances to produce the enjoyments and sufferings that are otherwise unaccountably experienced. Having inferred the reality of the invisible 'Karma' from such incidents of special kinds, we apply the principle to all cases and we find that it is quite logically maintainable.

Critic.—While admitting that the assumption of invisible causes may be necessary for explaining the facts of experience which are inexplicable in terms of the visible causes, we find no logical ground for your conclusion that the causes of enjoyments and sufferings of individuals must be the unreaped fruits or unmanifested effects of the previous actions of the same individuals, existing unaccountably in some subtle states. If whenever an effect is produced, its cause would become manifest and would also become an object of our knowledge, then the ascertainment of the cause through the help of the effect might become possible. How the effect becomes invariably related to its cause and how and why the consequent is regulated by the antecedent phenomena are beyond our apprehension. It is beyond our capacity to know how many kinds of unseen causes can contribute to the production of any effect. This being the case, we can only infer that there are causes beyond those that we actually observe, but we cannot ascertain their nature. Further, the law of causation does not necessarily imply that the causes of the enjoyments and sufferings of individuals must be the actions performed by the same individuals, whether immediately before the experience of those effects or in some previous state of

existence. No necessary causal connection between the enjoyments and sufferings of any individual and his own actions being established, there is no logical justification for supposing the existence of the unverifiable previous actions as the only possible causes of our pleasurable and painful experiences. Hence the *Law of Karma* is found to have no logical foundation to stand upon. Moreover, even if the Law be assumed, it must be explained where and how the unreaped fruits of the previous actions can exist in the subtle state. No such legitimate explanation is available.

Advocate.—The *Law of Karma* is the law of moral causation. The very principle of moral causation is that all phenomena affecting the interests of moral beings must be in strict conformity to their worthiness or desert. Every man has got moral responsibility for his actions and acquires merits and demerits by the performance of right and wrong actions ; and his enjoyments and sufferings must be in accordance with the merits and demerits he acquires. If the amounts of pleasure and pain enjoyed and suffered by any man are not found to be consistent with the merits and demerits acquired by him in this life by his actions, we must assume that he must have acquired such merits and demerits as are necessary for accounting for the present enjoyments and sufferings, by his actions performed previously to his present bodily life. Non-recognition of this would imply the denial of the law of harmony between deserts and consequences—between merits and enjoyments and between demerits and sufferings. The denial of this law of moral causation would lead to the denial of morality itself—denial of ought and ought-not, virtue and vice, duty and obligation. This would strike at the root of man's moral consciousness, which is the most essential element of human nature. The solution

of the problem as to where and how the past *karma* resides and how it produces effects after an interval of a long period, is not so difficult as it appears. The different kinds of merits and demerits, due to different kinds of actions, reside in the soul, which continues throughout all the changes of states, and they become manifest and potent in accordance with a definite order and determine the courses of future enjoyments and sufferings by exerting their influence upon the observable circumstances with which the soul becomes connected. The merits and demerits arising from many actions may have to wait long in the soul, till the stronger merits and demerits residing therein produce their consequences.

Critic.—Well, here again you try to establish one hypothesis on the strength of another hypothesis. As you do not find any invariable concomitance in the world of observation, between merits and demerits on the one hand and enjoyments and sufferings on the other, what you call the law of moral causation is far from being an established truth. How on the strength of this unestablished law can you infer previous lives, actions performed in them and the merits and demerits acquired thereby? Even if the law of moral causation be admitted on the ground of a general belief in the principle of justice, the existence of pre-natal *karma* cannot be logically inferred therefrom. A rational view about the matter would require the confession that there are many cases of enjoyments and sufferings which you cannot account for consistently with the merits and demerits of persons concerned and that they remain an unaccountable riddle to the human understanding. Moreover, you treat *karma* as the efficient cause of joy and sorrow. But there is no such rule that the efficient cause and the effect should be co-existent. That is to say, there

is no reasonable ground for assuming that the efficient causes of the joys and sorrows, through which an individual soul passes, must be attached to the same soul. The efficient causes may be external powers determining the nature of effects from outside. Further, there is no valid ground to assert that the efficient causes of various effects must necessarily be many. We find in many instances that though the effects are many, their efficient cause is one. So from the observation of the plurality of effects you cannot infer a variety of their efficient causes. Besides, *karma* falls in the category of effect, so it cannot be the prime cause.

Advocate.—From our remembrance of past experiences, we may deduce the *Law of Karma.*

Critic.—Remembrance is not of a uniform nature; sometimes it becomes weak and sometimes strong. When there are repeated impressions of the same object in the mind, remembrance about it becomes strong ; otherwise it becomes faded. The various factors of the past experience are not reproduced completely and simultaneously in remembrance in the same form in which they were experienced. Sometimes one impression becomes predominant, other impressions remain totally or partly forgotten. How many past experiences do not rise above the threshold of our consciousness ! It is found that sometimes a person affected by some disease altogether forgets his past. Moreover, in a normal condition of the mind some exciting condition is generally necessary for the awaking of an impression. The sight of something similar, the perception or contemplation of something associated with the thing to be remembered and the like become such exciting conditions. If such conditions are repeatedly present, the impression of the object becomes awakened again and again

it acquires a general tendency to come to the field of waking consciousness. In the absence of such exciting conditions, the impressions of even the most familiar objects are gradually faded. Changes of mental and environmental conditions also produce changes in the character of the ideas of objects as reproduced in remembrance. It is experienced that those things to which we were attached previously are not remembered in the same manner, when a change in that attitude takes place. So owing to the change of self-interest and the exciting conditions, the past experience does not come to us in the same manner. Hence taking our stand on remembrance which is of such an inconstant, unstable nature, we cannot arrive at any reliable conclusion with regard to the exact character of what we might or might not have experienced long ago.

Virtue and Vice Undefinable.

In the above discussion having granted the validity of virtue and vice, we have proved that the *Law of Karma* cannot be established. But the question may be raised, whether there is any rational ground for maintaining the validity of the distinction between virtue and vice, and whether it is possible to form a definite conception of this distinction.

Some maintain that those acts which take us Godward or towards Salvation are virtuous; others think that virtuous actions may not have the aforesaid nature, but those actions which are prescribed by the Scriptures are virtuous. But we cannot ascertain the virtuous character of actions in either of these ways.

The definition, viz. that virtue consists in activities leading us towards God, takes for granted that God exists,

that it is possible for us to approach towards Him and ultimately to attain unity or proximity with Him, and that certain types of actions lead us towards Him and others away from Him. All these are assumptions which are lacking in logical proof. Even if the existence of God be assumed, there is no proof that He is approachable by us and that some kinds of actions lead us towards Him and some astray from Him. What we actually experience is that every action produces some physical and some psychical results i. e. every action produces some changes in the external world and some changes in the mind. There is nothing to demonstrate that these changes are in any way connected with the supposed ultimate Reality or the ultimate Cause of the world-system. Moreover, there appears to be no satisfactory ground for believing that to attain unity or proximity with the ultimate Cause of the universe is or ought to be the final object of human desire. That the ultimate Cause of the world-system should also be the ultimate ideal of human life demands proof which is unavailable. Even if this were accepted, what is the authority that can assure us that such and such practices should unite us with God and such actions should not.

The conception which seeks to define virtue and vice in terms of Salvation is also lacking in rational ground. Whether salvation is possible at all, and if possible, what its true nature is, cannot be logically ascertained. The idea of salvation is connected with the idea of the self, and both these ideas differ in different systems of religion. That certain actions are causes of salvation and others are obstacles to it is a matter of faith, not based on any valid rational ground and is not generally admitted. Even if it were admitted, different ideas about salvation would lead

to different ideas about virtue and vice. There being numerous conflicting views about the nature of salvation, there should naturally be conflicting views with regard to what actions are virtuous and what actions are vicious. The same types of actions should be admitted as virtuous from one point of view and condemned as vicious from another point of view. Because actions are done in the sole interest of the self and because spiritual practices cannot be proved to have any reference to any ultimate reality and because there is no agreement in presence as well as in absence between the alleged virtuous actions and their imagined results, the nature of virtue remains undetermined.

To get rid of these difficulties, many pious men hold that whatever actions are approved by the Scriptures should be accepted as virtuous and whatever are condemned by them as vicious should be regarded as such. But this claim also does not stand on a more solid foundation. Different religious sects have different Scriptures, and it is difficult to determine which of them has a higher authority. The different Scriptures enjoin duties in accordance with the nature of the ideals they set up as the *Summum Bonum* of life. These ideals being conflicting, the ideas about virtue and vice also become conflicting. As no ultimate ideal, acceptable to all, can be logically established, and as the efficacies of particular kinds of actions for the realisation of such an ideal also cannot be demonstrated, the claim of any kind of actions enjoined by any Scripture to be regarded as virtuous cannot be logically justified.

Some think that moral consciousness is an essential factor in man, and as the fundamental logical laws for the determination of truth and error come from the theoretical

aspect of his rational nature and are *a priori* true, so the fundamental moral laws for the determination of virtue and vice come from the moral aspect of his nature and are similarly *a priori* valid. Accordingly, virtue and vice should be ascertained by reference to these fundamental moral laws, of which the universal moral consciousness inherent in the nature of every man is the ultimate source. But this definition is not sound. It assumes that the moral consciousness is universally present in every individual, and that it lays down positive rules of virtue and vice which every man must accept on account of that common moral character. But in actual experience we find no justification for this assumption. Though the notions of 'ought' and 'ought not' may be found to be common to men in general, we find no general rules with regard to 'what ought to be done' and 'what ought not to be done' in the human society. If like the fundamental principles of logic, we could discover fundamental principles of morality readily admitted by all rational beings, then only the determination of virtue and vice by such a uniform moral consciousness could be established. But what we actually find is the contrary of this. The principles of rightness and virtue are found to be so conflicting among the different sections of Humanity, that we find no rational ground for believing in the *a priori* character of the moral laws. Hence the appeal to such supposed moral law can be of no use in determining the character of virtue and vice.

Men are not found to be naturally endowed with ethical ideas from their very birth. The notion of duty does not naturally arise in children, but is the result of education. Though we find among people the discrimination of good and bad actions, still from that no ethical law can be determined. What is considered as good in one

society is taken as bad in another ; what is reckoned as good in one state is counted as bad in another state; what is good to one in one state is bad to another in that very state. For the sake of the preservation and development of a harmonious relationship among the members of the society, for bringing about some sort of reconciliation among the divergent and conflicting interests of the people and for keeping up a uniformity among their varied actions, the notions of goodness and badness of actions are introduced by influential individuals or by groups of them. If some common purpose is the motive force and controlling power, regulating individuals' actions, then the society is managed well and the individuals can live comfortably and pursue their own ends without any clash with one another, but rather with the friendly co-operation of one another. The notions of goodness and badness introduced for the requirements of the society get also changed in accordance with the difference of place, time, the characteristics of the people, their political and economic conditions and modes of training. Owing to the similarity of social aims on the one hand and the likeness of human nature on the other, sometimes the same action is regarded as good or bad in different societies. Hence no universally applicable law of morality can be established ; so the ascertainment of goodness and badness of actions according to such law is not possible.

There are others who think that actions which are done with good motives are good. But this definition involves the fallacy of *Petitio Principii.* Without ascertaining the goodness of actions the goodness of their motives cannot be determined. Moreover, it cannot be laid down that the nature of actions will be according to the respective attitude of mind.

Others consider those actions as good, which are consistent with the voice of conscience. But this definition is not also reliable. The alleged voice is not constant. It is merely a state of mind, which gets transformed according to education and the environment. What is deemed good by one's conscience is considered otherwise by another's. The rule of following conscience cannot be justified, for it would involve setting the ethical convictions of one man, or group of men, above those of another. And there is no more ultimate authority than conscience itself or ethical conviction, by which such a procedure could be justified. Moreover, it is not unoften experienced that the alleged voice of an individual's conscience dictates a course of action which is generally condemned as vicious and which is regarded by others as putting obstacles in the path of moral and spiritual progress. Thus it is altogether unsafe to rely upon the voice of our conscience as final in the determination of virtue and vice. In fact, no section of the human society leaves the question of virtue and vice to the uncertain dictates of individual conscience.

Others think that the goodness and badness of actions are known by their beneficial and injurious results. But this also is not proper. What gives joy to some persons does not give joy to others. The notions of benefit and injury vary according to place, temperament, age, mood, mental development and the like. Owing to different attitudes of mind, the same thing may be regarded by the same man as beneficial on certain occasions and injurious on others. Thus variable subjective feelings like pleasure and pain and changing ideas of benefit and injury cannot be the standard of objective goodness and badness of actions. So virtue and vice cannot be determined by the standard of benefit and injury or of joy and sorrow. Moreover, we

have no capacity to determine, how, where, why, when, and how much our actions will bear fruits. Though we sometimes experience that our actions bear some fruits, yet we cannot measure, how many causes have contributed to the production of the said result, nor can we know what sort of fruits such actions will produce elsewhere, in some unseen region or at another time. From results produced by actions we should not determine the nature of those actions, because we find that particular kinds of actions do not uniformly produce the same results. It is sometimes observed that all persons do not attain to the same result even though they make at one time the same effort for the accomplishment of the same object. So from results of actions, we cannot determine the nature of actions.

Some consider actions done without any self-interest (निष्काम) as good. But this is simply absurd. An action has its root in desire, and the satisfaction of the desire is always the object of every voluntary action. Thus self-interest is the motive of all conscious efforts. All activities are guided by the motive of attaining some agreeable objects and getting rid of some disagreeable objects. In the absence of attachment and aversion towards any object, there cannot be any impulse to activity. Moreover, no conscious and active individual self can ever be completely free from desire. The desire for self-preservation, self-development and self-enjoyment is inherent in the very nature of its existence. Without this desire, life would be impossible. This desire must express itself in the forms of particular desires for particular appropriate objects. This desire belongs to the mind or the self, and as long as there is the sense of self-hood, desire must remain more or less. So any absolutely disinterested action is not possible. Hence the above definition is untenable.

Thus we find that all possible attempts to define the nature of virtue and vice are beset with logical as well as practical difficulties. Hence, as the character of virtue and vice — goodness and badness — is itself unascertainable, it cannot be rationally accepted as the basis of the *Law of Karma*.

II.

The Theory that Karma is the cause of the relation of self with body involves the fallacy of interdependence.

Now, let us show the untenability of the view that the relation of the individual self with the body, is due to *karma*. Those who advocate the *theory of karma* must accept the self as something distinct from the body. But without the relation of the self with some body its relation with action is not possible. Action involves change or modification. If the self unrelated to any body be active, then it would be subject to change and therefore subject to destruction. Further, in that case there would be a series of selves, each being born and destroyed, and there would be no permanent support of *karma*. Hence *karma* would be destroyed with the destruction of the self that performs the actions. Thus consistently with this theory, the self unrelated to the body cannot engage itself in any action and therefore cannot acquire any *karma*. Hence *karma* being the result of the self's association with the body, its association with the body cannot be ultimately due to *karma*. Nor can it be said that the self's relation of *karma*, though the effect of its association with a previous body, is the cause of its relation with the present body, and that this process has been going on from eternity. In that case, the existence of the flow of

bodies in relation to the self is dependent upon the existence of the flow of *karma*, which again is dependent on the former. Hence there will be the fault of interdependence. Without relation of the body with the self, the production of virtue and vice is impossible, and without the production of virtue and vice, the production of the self's relation with the body is regarded as causeless. Each is thus the cause of the other,—which is irrational, and which consequently leaves both of them unexplained. As neither is established on any independent logical grounds, one cannot be the ground of the proof of the other.

To explain, it is not yet settled that virtue and vice are accomplished by the self, because the self without being dependent on the body etc., cannot work and acquire merit and demerit. Virtue and vice are produced by efforts through speech, intelligence and the body. Hence without relation with the body, the self cannot in any way work. The said relation of the self with the body being ordained first, the self can accomplish virtue and vice. When there is no such relation with the body, virtue and vice cannot be possible. If it be asserted that by virtue and vice there is the said relation with the body, then we will be forced to hold that when the existence of virtue and vice in the self will be established, the relation of the self with the body will be established and when this relation with the body will be proved, the existence of virtue and vice in the self will be proved. So there will be the fallacy of interdependence.

Advocate— If it were said that the *karma* of the nature of virtue and vice produced by this body is the cause of the relation of the self with this body, then there would be no doubt the fallacy of interdependence ; but we do not mean to say so. What we mean to say is that by

the *karma* of the previous body there is production of the relation of this body with the self, and the previous body is produced by the *karma* of the body previous to that. In this way, owing to the beginninglessness of the self and *karma*, no fault of interdependence occurs. This may be illustrated by the beginningless succession observed in the case of the seed and the tree.

Critic— There is no proof about this beginninglessness. It is perceived that from the seed there is the growth of the tree, and from that tree, there is the production of another seed. But it is not known by perception that the relation of the body with the self has taken place owing to previous *karma*. Hence the assumption of this beginningless series is not warranted by perception. That is, the cause-effect-relation between the seed and the tree is known by perception, so there is justification for the inference of the beginninglessness of their mutual succession. But that the body is produced by merit and guilt is not known by perception. Hence the production of the body by virtue and vice is not proved.

Advocate—We maintain the theory of the pre-existence of effects. Everything is in essence eternal. The things which appear to come into existence could not have been absolutely non-existent, because the non-existent can never come into existence. Similarly, the existent can never become absolutely non-existent and therefore cannot be annihilated. There is the mere manifestation of the effects from their unmanifested states through the causal process, and their passing into the unmanifested states through the process of destruction. Hence we maintain that though the relation of interdependence appears to occur in connection with the present topic, still it cannot in this case be called a fault ;

because the self's relation to *Karma* and relation to body are both beginningless, neither having any absolute beginning, neither having been non-existent at any time. If the self's relation to body or its relation to *Karma* had any absolute beginning or first production, then only the assertion of their mutual cause-effect-relation would have involved the logical fallacy of interdependence. But since both are without beginning, there is no real cause-effect-relation between them, in the sense in which the relation is ordinarily understood. Truly speaking, they are two mutually successive factors in one beginningless continuous process of modification of the self's phenomenal life. In this process the self's transmigration from bodies to bodies, gross and subtle, manifested and unmanifested and its performance of actions and reaping their fruits are both involved, each exerting its influence upon and determining the nature and course of the other. Hence the logical fallacy of interdependence cannot arise in this connection

Critic— This sort of advocacy cannot establish a logically untenable doctrine. If it is said that there is no real cause-effect-relation, then both should be regarded as existing independently of each other and neither can be said to be caused or determined by the other. In that case how can you in the same breath assert that the self's relation with any particular body is the result of its past *karma* and that its *karma* is the result of its relation with the body? The supposition of the beginninglessness of the process also cannot improve the situation, because the manifestation of every event is regarded by you also as having a beginning and as dependent on the operation of its cause. Though there may be eternity of the essence (स्वरूप) both of the self's relation to body and its relation to

karma, still as the non-eternity of their manifestation and its dependence on the operation of some cause are admitted, the fault of interdependence cannot be prevented, because the manifestation of the self's relation to body would depend upon its relation to *karma* and the manifestation of the latter would depend upon the former. Thus, the recognition of the eternity of the self's relation to body and to *karma* and of the non-eternity of their manifestation in conformity to the doctrine of the pre-existence of effects, cannot remove the fault of interdependence already referred to.

Advocate—Mr. Critic, you misinterpret our position. We do not maintain that at any time the self's relation to body and its relation to *karma* were in an absolutely unmanifested state, and that afterwards each was manifested by the operation of the other. If we had made any such assertion, then of course our doctrine would have involved the fallacy of interdependence. In that case, the process of the self's relation to body and relation to *karma* would not have been beginningless, but only their essence would have been eternal. Our position is that the process itself is without any beginning. An unbroken succession of the self's relation to body and to *karma* is going on from eternity, and in this continuous process each is determined by the other. The manifested and the unmanifested states also are steps in the process, in which the continuity is not broken. The stream of succession flows in the following way, though there is no absolute beginning of the stream. (प्रवाह अनादि). The relation of the self with any particular body is the result of its previous virtue and vice, which are not caused by the relation of the self with that body. By its relation with one body, some virtue and vice occur, and such virtue and vice become the

cause of its relation with another body, and this becomes the cause of further virtue and vice, and so on. The recognition of such an unbroken succession involves no fallacy of interdependence.

Critic— Let us accept this interpretation of your position and put to you a few questions relevant to it.

Do *karma* and body eternally and inherently pertain to the nature of the self, or are they associated with the self, which is essentially free from them ? Secondly, does the self's body presuppose its *karma* or does its *karma* presuppose its body, or are *karma* and body attached to the self without any of them presupposing the other ? If the answer to the first alternative of the first question be in the affirmative, then the self being eternally and essentially embodied and active can never be free from the relation to body and activity, and hence *moksha* (liberation) would be impossible and the ultimate purpose of religion would be baffled. If they are associated with the self without pertaining to its essential nature, then their association must have a cause. What is then the cause of this association ? If you call it ignorance or indiscrimination or anything else, the self's relation to that cause also being not essential to the self's nature must presuppose another cause, and so on *ad infinitum*. You cannot say that the self is essentially free from body and *karma*, and still they are related to it without any ground or cause. With regard to the second question, if the self's body presuppose its *karma*, then the bodiless self should be regarded as having activity and acquiring merit and demerit. But this is not admitted, because in that case *karma* would constitute the nature of the self, the self would eternally be a phenomenal entity and its *moksha* would be impossible. Moreover, action implies, a change or modification, but the

simple nature of the self cannot admit of change or modification. The nature of the self being *simple*, any change in it would mean its destruction, which is of course inadmissible. It can be the seat or support of changes, only when embodied. There may be changes or modifications of the body through activity, the self remaining their permanent support. Hence the self cannot by itself be active and related to *karma*. If then the second alternative be accepted, viz. that *karma* presupposes the self's body, then the self's relation to the body cannot be regarded as dependent upon its *karma*. If, again, the body's being the effect of *karma* be abandoned, then the body must be conceived as essentially related to the self. In that case the very conception of the self has to be changed, and the self should be regarded as an embodied being. Even if this be accepted, then *karma*, being the inevitable product of the self's relation to body, would never forsake the self and would thus make liberation impossible. If, again, the third alternative be accepted, i. e. if the self be regarded as by itself eternally embodied and eternally active, then the conception of the self should be altogether changed, the self would be under the eternal bondage of *karma* and bodily limitations, *moksha* would be impossible, and above all, *karma* and body being independent of each other, the very *Law of Karma* itself would be abandoned.

Thus the doctrine of the beginningless unbroken succession of body, activity, *karma* and enjoyments and sufferings can in no way be logically substantiated.

If it be said that though there is no action on the part of the bodiless self, still there can be agency, that is, though by itself without actions, still there can be agency due to its being the cause of others' actions, as is the case with a king, who, in spite of not doing anything, due to his mere

presence becomes the agent of ruling his kingdom ; in this way, though there is no action in the self, still there can be its agency. Hence virtue and vice can be worked by the self and as the result of it, its corporeality can be treated as the result of virtue and vice. But the said interpretation is not correct, because the example cited is not to the point. Though the king does not do anything himself, still by the gift of money etc., he makes his servants act for him, and hence what is done by his servants is but his own doing. In this manner, there is the relation of the nature of lordship due to the gift of money etc.; and for this reason though the king does not himself do anything, yet by his mere presence he does the action of governing his kingdom. If in the case under discussion, the self were found to be the lord of the body, then its agency would have been proved. But the self has no relation of the nature of lordship of the body, because like the gift of money nothing is here found as the cause of that relation. Hence by the example of the king, the agency of the self cannot be explained. Thus the conclusion, namely, self's relation with the body is due to *karma* is not valid.

III.

The conception of karma, whether having beginning or having no beginning, defeats karma law.

Now it has to be considered whether I, *karma* precedes the existence of individual living beings, or II, the existence of these beings precedes the production of *karma* or III, both remain together and become produced, or IV, both are eternally related.

(I.) The first alternative is inconceivable, because *karma* cannot exist without something to rest on. Moreover, in that case, we fail to explain how this *karma* belongs to this individual and that does not. Besides, in that case, every individual would originally be affected by the *karma*, which it has not acquired by its own activity. This would destroy the very fundamental principle of the *karma-theory* itself. Further, if *karma*, originally unrelated to the individuals and unacquired by them, become afterwards related to them, there is no reason why *karma* of different individuals should be different; and if, on the other hand, the original *karma* be taken as uniform, then there would be nothing to produce differences among the careers and destinies of different individuals afterwards. If *karma* be assumed to be different from the very beginning, then it has to be admitted that there are many self-existent *karma*, whose differences are independent of any actions or agents. In that case, as their original differences are not caused by anything other than themselves, the same may be supposed to happen lower down in all the stages. That is to say, at every stage in the lives of the individuals. the differences of destinies may be supposed to be independent of their previous actions. Thus the recognition of *karma-theory* becomes unnecessary.

(II.) The second alternative also cannot be consistently maintained. In this case there will be no necessity of accepting the *theory of karma* for explaining differences among individuals, because before the production and the relation of *karma* with these beings differences are already there. If the world is regulated at one time without *karma*, then it is not sound logic to accept *karma* as the cause of the regulation of the universe at other times. So the *karma theory* falls down.

(III.) If the third alternative is accepted, then *karma* will not be the cause of the relation of the self with the body and thus of its being a particular individual. So the *karma-theory* is not valid.

(IV.) The fourth alternative cannot be upheld. *Karma* must presuppose the existence of a doer. If, however, the doer i. e. the self, is by nature under the domain of *karma* and is not the cause of it—that is to say, if *karma* is not the result of the action of any doer, but is associated with every self and eternally determines the course of its actions—then there should be no room for freedom of will, duty and responsibility and hence virtue and vice. But the very foundation of the *Law of Karma* is that every individual self is the builder of its own destiny, i. e. every self is responsible for the actions performed by it and its enjoyments and sufferings, births and deaths etc. are the fruits of its own actions. This foundation will be shaken by the acceptance of the above doctrine. Further, if every individual living being be considered to be equally burdened with beginningless *karma*, how to account for the differences among different individual selves, what explanations can be offered for different individuals acting and enjoying and suffering in different ways, and for their being born under different kinds of circumstances and getting different kinds of opportunities and difficulties? Either it should be admitted that from the same cause different kinds of effects can be produced or that there are different kinds of *karma* eternally guiding the destinies of different individual selves. The first alternative is inconsistent with the universally accepted Law of Causality and the second would virtually mean that the divergences of tendencies, actions, enjoyments and sufferings are not explicable in terms of any uniform principle. Hence the

real purpose of the enunciation of the *Law of Karma* would be frustrated.

Moreover, the advocates of this theory admit that *karma* has no beginning and at the same time it has an end. But this is difficult to understand. If the selves are eternally under the controlling influence of *karma*, if *karma* is regarded as determining the courses of the lives of all individuals, how can the *karma* be destroyed? Is it to be supposed that *karma* destroys itself? This is self-contradictory. Even if it were admitted that it is the nature of *karma* to destroy itself after a certain period, no explanation can be offered why it will destroy itself at different times in the case of different selves. It cannot be said that it is the knowledge of truth which destroys it and thereby its destruction at different times in different cases is explained; because the production of knowledge also, according to this theory, must be determined by *karma* and hence ultimately *karma* becomes the cause of its own destruction and the objection remains unanswered. Further, it is difficult to maintain that the uncaused eternal entity, viz. *karma*, should have an end. Besides, the power of knowledge to destroy *karma* is not logically established. Knowledge can destroy only its opposites, viz. ignorance and error. If knowledge be regarded as the destroyer of *karma* as well, then *karma* should be conceived as the product of ignorance or error of the particular selves, and hence not beginningless. Moreover, the capacity of ignorance or error to produce *karma* is also not demonstrated.

Thus it is proved that if *karma* is with beginning, the *Law of Karma* fails; and if the *karma* is without beginning, then also the *Law of karma* fails.

IV.

Adjustment of the results of karma indeterminable.

The *law of karma* demands an adjustment of the results of *karma*. On this point, there are mainly three alternatives— A. Actions determine their own results, B. individual selves determine the fruits of their actions and finally, C. God is the regulator of the results of actions. Now let us examine the validity of all these alternatives.

A

(1) That actions themselves produce their own results cannot be logically established. Actions are performed at one time and their fruits are regarded as being reaped after a lapse of time, sometimes in different births or different states of existence of the self. Thus at the time of the production of the consequences, the actions are no longer existent, because they last only so long as they are actually performed. How can the non-existent actions be the causes of the consequences? Since the actions are destroyed just after the performance is over, they cannot be conceived as giving rise to consequences which appear long afterwards, because the cause must be present to produce the effects.

Advocate—Actions produce their results indirectly and not directly. The process is this. As soon as an action, right or wrong, is performed, a subtle result of the nature of merit or demerit is produced. This result is called *apurva*. Hence there is a direct causal relation between the action and the *apurva* arising out of it. As every individual has a variety of *apurva* in store for him on account

of the variety of his past actions, each *apurva* takes longe or shorter time to become ripe for manifestation, in accordance with its relative strength and vitality. When any *apurva* becomes ripe enough (through subtle modification in the unmanifested state) it becomes manifested in the form of enjoyment or suffering. Thus there is a direct causal relation between *apurva* and the perceptible result. Hence the actions become the causes of the enjoyments or sufferings of individuals, through the process of the production and ripening of *apurva*. As no other separate agency is necessary for bringing about the connection between the actions and their consequences, the actions may legitimately be regarded as the sole independent determinant of the consequences.

Critic— Here many questions arise :—What is this *apurva* ? What are its respective relations to actions, consequences and the individual ? What is the proof of its existence in the imperceptible state ? Where does it reside in that state ? By what cause is its ripening determined ? and so on. It is not appropriate to treat it as the subtle state of the past action itself, because action consists in the 'doing' or 'performing', and the process of doing or performing cannot continue to exist in any subtle or unmanifested state after any deed is done. The action is destroyed as soon as the actual performance is finished. Further, the merit or demerit, alleged to be produced by any right or wrong action, cannot be identified with the action itself, for in that case the consequences of actions would be the same as the actions themselves. This would be unacceptable, even to the upholders of this theory. In actions, the individual is the agent acting, while in reaping the consequences the individual is the patient being acted upon. An individual may voluntarily perform a wrong action, but

no one voluntarily suffers its painful consequence. Hence the essence of suffering the consequence cannot consist in the doing of the action, as the above supposition would imply. Moreover, there is no proof of the production and existence of the *apurva*. The *apurva* is supposed as a hypothesis, for bridging over the gulf between actions and their supposed consequences. Thus one supposition is established on the strength of another supposition. Neither of them is proved. Then again, the *apurva* being the product of action, cannot be regarded as self-modifying, and its ripening must depend upon some other cause, which is unavailable according to this theory. Time cannot be regarded as the cause, because the causal agency of time is unestablished. Time and space cannot be the producer of those results because both of them, being undifferentiated in nature, are indifferent to the inequalities of results of *karma*. In case they could produce such results, then both would undergo transformation. Because these two are taken as one, undifferentiated and without function, they cannot be the cause of occasional actions.

Moreover, *apurva* cannot be a modified form of action, since action or motion cannot have modification, which is a property of a substance. Even if such modification were granted, what would be the support of that modification? The individul self cannot be its support, because the modification of one cannot be supported by another. The modification of action, if any, must be supported by materials of these actions and the self is admittedly different from those materials. So how can these modifications reside in the self? The modification of substances by means of which actions are performed (कारक) cannot have any relation with the next world ; so it cannot produce results there. So it is not sound to assume that actions bear their

own fruits through the mediation of an unseen entity, namely *apurva*.

(2) The doctrine that *karma* determines and adjusts its own results has taken mainly two distinct forms. In one form the existence of permanent individual selves, to which the tendencies and activities as well as the enjoyments and sufferings are attached and which pass through various states of existence without losing their identity, is admitted, and in another form the existence of such permanent selves is not admitted. In the foregoing discussion, we have examined the theory in its first form. Now we are to consider it in its second form.

In this form the individuals are regarded as merely the embodiments of *karma* and they are ever-changing. As in the case of a flame, in no two moments it remains identically the same, but its appearance or existence in each succeeding moment is the effect of that in each preceding moment; so is exactly the case with every individual living being. Like the flame, what we experience as an individual being is a continuous flow of momentary phenomenal selves, each momentarily existent self being the effect of the self of the moment just preceding it. Again, as a flame may be extinguished just after kindling another flame, which though not identical with the former is its effect, so when an individual dies, the flow of *karma* of which he was embodiment becomes embodied in another individual. This is what is regarded as transmigration. It does not imply the passing of any permanent self from one body to another, but the passing of the flow of *karma* from one name and form to another. This flow of *karma* continues through various names and forms according to its own law, till the flow ceases altogether in *Nirvana*.

Now let us examine this theory. This form of the *Law of Karma* appears to be of the nature of a law of phenomenal causation without any noumenal background. A conglomeration of phenomena is regarded as being immediately followed by another conglomeration, which is altogether different from the former. A conglomeration consists of psychical and physical phenomena. Every life is a continuous series of such conglomeration. There is a causal relation between each antecedent conglomeration and each consequent conglomeration. Now, the question is, how can any causal relation be ascertained between such an antecedent and such a consequent, each of which is annihilated as soon as it comes into existence ? The ascertainment of a causal relation between two phenomena or two groups of phenomena requires the observation by the same person of the invariable concomitance between them in a large number of instances. This is not possible in the case in question, because the sameness of the observer in different cases of observation is not recognised, and the conception of a class of phenomena of the same nature cannot possibly be formed, and even the relation between two phenomena cannot be observed.

Again, how can there be any conglomeration of different phenomena, if none of the phenomena exist for more than a single moment ? The conglomeration itself being inexplicable in the light of this theory, the invariable and inevitable causal relation between two successive conglomerations becomes all the more inconceivable.

Even if the possibility of such a causal relation be assumed, the *Law of Karma* is far from being established. The conception of the *Law of Karma* is associated with the conception of morality. It implies that the destiny of every individual is determined by the moral effects of his

own actions, and in practical application of the law those who deny the existence of any permanent self and permanent matter admit this and take the help of this law to account for the different destinies of different individuals. Their conception of *sādhanā* for the attainment of the highest goal also implies that the person who performs the actions reaps their fruits. Now, how in the absence of the identity of the doer and the reaper of the fruits can such a law be conceived ? If the agent dies immediately after performing the action, the moral result will be enjoyed or suffered by a different self that will be born, and this is inconsistent with the fundamental conception of the *Law of Karma* itself. Further, how can a self, that dies as soon as it is born, be the agent of any action or the reaper of any fruits at all ? No relation between any still-born self and any action or any joy or sorrow can be rationally conceived.

The exponents of this theory while advocating the momentariness of all selves and things, do not confine the operation of the *Law of Karma* only to the present particular flow of life, in which we experience at least empirically an unbroken continuity. They maintain that the unreaped fruits of the actions of the previous flows of lives are enjoyed and suffered in the succeeding flows of lives. In the absence of any identical self in the midst of all these flows, what meaning can the expression convey that every individual living being enjoys and suffers the unreaped fruits of the actions of previous lives ? The very conception of transmigration or re-birth is incompatible with the assertion of the non-permanence of the self.

Then again, the individuals are regarded as the embodiments of *karma*. But what does that mean ? Is *karma*

a self-transforming real entity, which modifies itself into various forms of self-conscious living beings? Then *karma* would be a permanent entity, which is of course unacceptable to the advocates of this theory. Even if such a constantly self-transforming principle were recognised, the *Law of Karma* as it is generally understood and as it is applied by the advocates of this theory also, would not be established, because no individual selves, as self-conscious beings, could then be held responsible for their actions and their destinies, as the *Law of Karma* assumes. There would then be absolute determinism, and no room for the possibility of moral endeavoures, on which the exponents of the view lay so much stress.

If, again, *karma* were the all-determining force in the universe, emancipation from *karma* and attainment of what is called *Nirvāna* would be inconceivable. *Nirvāna* would then mean the destruction of the eternal *karma* by itself at a certain point of time, and this is self-contradictory. Even if it were possible, the entire world of living beings would have attained *Nirvāna* at the same time, because the apparently different individuals are the embodiments of the same *karma*, whose self-annihilation would involve the annihilation of all.

Thus it is found that the second form of the doctrine also that *karma* determines and adjusts its own results cannot be logically expounded.

B

Now about the alternative that the individual living being is the regulator of the results of *karma*. In order to regulate *karma*, one should have knowledge about the nature of the action, its results, the experiencer of the

results, place and time etc., and an individual living being cannot possibly possess this knowledge. It is well-known that an individual living being's desired things are not obtained, and instead unexpected results are found to happen. If the individual had the capacity to rule his own destiny (अदृष्ट), then he would never allow his actions to produce undesirable consequences. But as the individuals are found to suffer consequences, which they never desire to obtain by their actions, they cannot be regarded as the regulators of the results of their *karma*.

C

Now about the third alternative, namely that God is the regulator of the *law of karma*. Though God is conceived as possessed of eternal knowledge etc., and so is distinguished from individual finite selves, the regulatorship of *karma* cannot reasonably be attributed to Him. God has intrinsically one unchanging nature, whose manifestation in the world-process ought to be in the same uniform manner. If God's regulatorship of *karma* be admitted, it should be conceived as operating unceasingly and without break in the same uniform way throughout eternity. In that case if *karma* remains at any time in a potential or unmanifested state, it ought to remain eternally in that state and should never produce any actual consequences, and if on the other hand, it exists at any time in the kinetic or manifested state, it should always continue in that state and go on unceasingly producing the consequences. There cannot in that case be any change from the state of *pralaya* (dissolution), in which *karma* is inoperative and does not produce any body or enjoyment or suffering, to the state of 'creation', in which *karma* is alleged to be operative and to produce bodies and enjoyments and

sufferings, and *vice versa*. Similarly, in that case, there can be no cessation of the potency and productiveness of *karma* in the state of liberation (*mukti*). If it is argued that God, by the exercise of His free will, changes the modes of the operation of *karma*, then we ask—Is that will eternal or is it produced from time to time ? If the first view be accepted, then our aforesaid objection remains unrefuted, viz. that either the production of consequences must continue without any break and there would be no *mukti* and no *pralaya* or the production should not begin at all, according to the nature of His will. If on the other hand God wills differently at different times, there must be other causes for the production of His particular wills. These cannot be regarded as caused by the mere essence of Divine nature, for this essence being the same, differences of wills cannot take place. Moreover, if the will is taken as produced, then it will contradict the recognition of God's having eternal will and this contradiction will apply to the case of God's knowledge and effort as well. Moreover, it may be asked whether God regulates *karma* by effort, will and knowledge or by mere conjunction with them ? The first alternative is not acceptable because God is conceived as having no body. Without the possession of a body, knowledge, effort and will are not possible. The second alternative also is incapable of explaining the modes of the operation of *karma*. God has always conjunction with every particular being. So in this view there would always be conjunction with *karma* and so there will always be the production of consequences.

Advocate—Your criticism is based on a misconception of the nature of the regulatorship of God. God is conceived as the omnipotent and omniscient designer of the entire world-process. His eternal knowledge, will and

power are exhibited in the beginningless well-ordered harmonious system of the universe. The *law of karma* represents this divinely ordered process, as affecting the births and deaths, active and inactive states, enjoyments, sufferings and senseless conditions etc. of the innumerable finite selves related to this world-system. The successive series of creations and dissolutions and of the bodiless and the embodied states of the finite selves, constitutes no violation or break of the *law of karma*. All these occur in strict accordance with the divinely ordered *law of karma*, and for the particular expressions of the operation of this law God is not required to exert fresh wills and efforts. Hence there is no inconsistency between the eternal or non-produced knowledge, will and power of God and the diverse conditions produced by *karma* in the world of finite living beings. It is in accordance with the eternal knowledge, will and power of God, that after each dissolution the potential *karma* related to the different individual selves become awakened and endow each individual self with a body, with external circumstances, with impulses and tendencies and capacities, and with enjoyments and sufferings according to its deserts acquired by previous actions.

Critic—Even accepting your exposition of the nature of God's regulatorship of *karma*, we find no way to establish it on a logical basis. Does God regulate *karma* by being eternally related to it or by remaining eternally unrelated to it ? If He is related to *karma*, what can be the nature of the relation ? Now, if *karma* relates to God, He cannot be untouched by the consequences produced by the *karma* ; and if He is affected by the consequences, He is no longer God as conceived by you. If He has no relation with *karma*, He cannot awaken it and determine the course of its consequences. If what is unrelated to any being, can

be regulated by it, then any entity would be capable of regulating any other entity without any restriction. This would be an unwarrantable stretch. That there is no relation between God and *karma* is evident from the fact that there can be neither conjunction nor inherence of God with destiny, because destiny is said to be an attribute and not a substance, and also it is an attribute of individual selves. There cannot be subject-object-relation between God and destiny, because such a relation must always be based on a primary relation, and in this case there is no primary relation. From this it follows that God cannot have knowledge of destiny. Moreover, the question is, does *karma* produce results by being directed by God or not? If no active direction by Him is necessary, then the assumption of God for the sake of dispensing the results of actions is valueless. If the first alternative is accepted, then again the question is, whether God, while regulating the consequences experienced by the individuals, is dependent on virtue or vice of those individuals or not? If without any such dependence, God rules over the destinies of the individuals, then there would be the faults of partiality and cruelty on the part of God. Such a cruel and partial being should not be called God. If, again, God depends on virtue and vice, then there would be interdependence. Because virtue and vice are also particular results, it has to be admitted that God gives results according to virtue and vice. On the other hand, since there cannot be any self-determined activity on the part of the unconscious, *karma* for producing its result must be impelled and regulated by God. Thus by *karma* God is made to act and *karma* is made to produce its results through the activity of God. Hence there would be the fault of interdependence. It has to be admitted that *karma* forces God to produce its results when it becomes mature and the

maturity is the result of the modification of *karma* in its subtle state and this modification is again dependent on the will and power of God and the exercise of this will and power of God is regarded as dependent on *karma* ; in this way it leads to the fallacy of arguing in a circle. Again, God is conceived as the sole designer, creator and regulator of all the phenomena in the universe. The individual living beings are born in this universe with particular bodies under a variety of circumstances. The feelings and emotions, the tendencies and actions, the enjoyments and sufferings, etc., of those individuals are found to be the results of their connections with these circumstances. The question arises, whether the particular combinations of circumstances, under which particular individuals are born, are determined by God by the independent exercise of His will and power or He regulates the circumstances in accordance with the *karma* of those individuals. In the first case, the charges of caprice, partiality, cruelty etc., would be brought against Him. To avoid these charges it is held that He is under obligation to place the individuals under circumstances which they acquired as the results of their previous *karma*. But this theory is beset with several difficulties. First, it is not consistent with the sole independent regulatorship of God. Secondly, it has to be admitted that either He is not good and kind enough to place them under favourable circumstances by forgiving their previous bad actions or that inspite of His love and mercy He has not the power to favour them. Both these are incompatible with the cherished conception of God. Thirdly, even if it be maintained that it is the law of the exercise of His free will to regulate the phenomena of the world in relation to the individual finite selves in accordance with their respective deserts due to *karma*, He cannot evade the responsibility for the differential

treatment of these selves in the beginning of this creation, because before creation they had no previous *karma* and the differences of their *karma* were due to the differences of circumstances in which they were put at the time of creation.

Advocate.—This criticism is beside the point, because there is no absolute beginning of creation. The process of creation, dissolution, and fresh creation is going on from eternity. The arrangement of circumstances in the present creation is in accordance with the deserts of the finite selves in the past creation and so on. The divergences of circumstances in which the individual selves were put in the beginning of the present creation are accordingly the consequences of the actions of those individuals in the previous creation. God is the designer and regulator of the entire process.

Critic.—But your attempt to avoid the charges is more of the nature of an assertion than that of an argument. What is your proof of the existence of creations before the present creation? Is it the nature of the world-process to pass from the manifested state to the unmanifested state and again from the unmanifested state to the manifested state, and so on eternally? If this is the eternal inherent nature of the world-order, what is the necessity for the assumption of a creator and regulator of the world? Does not the supposition of a creator or producer of an uncreated or unproduced eternal entity involve a self-contradiction? If God be supposed to be the designer and creator of a series of successive worlds, this series also must have a beginning, and in that case the charge brought against His differential treatment of the individual selves should remain unrepudiated.

Again, do you think that God has to exercise willing and designing and creating power afresh for the production of the world-order after every dissolution, or do you consider His original exercise of the power sufficient for the creation of these successive worlds? If you accept the first alternative, then you are to admit that He was compelled by the power of *karma,* which was not created by Him, and was not changeable or modifiable by Him, to design and create in this particular way. In that case He would not be the sole creator of the world-system, and even in His own jurisdiction His power would be limited and restricted by the power of *karma.* Further, in that case the relation of God and *karma*, and the possibility of the power of *karma* to act upon the power of God would be inexplicable. If you do not admit this and hold that His power is unrestricted and *karma* also is created by Him, then the charges should remain unanswerable. Moreover, in that case God should be subject to change. Besides, if it be His nature to design and create the world-order and to reward and punish the finite selves for their deeds, the state of the dissolution of the world-system, in which there are no deeds and no reaping of the fruits of deeds of the finite selves, should be regarded as not caused by Him, but as occurring inspite of Him. He has to rid the world of this unmanifested or dissolved state by fresh exercise of His power.

If on the other hand God, by the single original act of His designing and creating power, originated this system, in which the world is sometimes in the manifested and sometimes in the dissolved state, then He must be held responsible for the *karma* as well as their fruits in relation to all individuals. In that case the recognition of the *Law of Karma* would be useless, because it would be sufficient

to say that it is the will of God which is the cause of the enjoyments and sufferings of all individuals.

We have here discussed the difficulties, from which we cannot escape, even if we admit the existence of creations before creations. But what is the ground of the inference of the existence of previous creations? There are no premises supplied by the experience of the present world, from which we can legitimately draw the inference. If we draw the inference on the ground that otherwise we cannot account for the divergences of circumstances and the consequent divergent enjoyments and sufferings of the individual selves in the beginning of the present creation, then we tacitly assume what has to be proved. This argument implies the *Law of Karma*, the validity of which is far from being rationally established. Here the *Law of Karma* becomes the ground of the inference of the existence of previous creations, and previous creations supply the rational basis of the operations of the *Law of Karma*. Thus it involves the fallacy of interdependence.

Advocate—Those charges are brought on the assumption that creation or the series of creations had a beginning in time, however remote it might have been. But our thesis is that the process of the world-system consisting in successive creations and dissolutions had no beginning in time. Hence nobody can be held responsible for the nature of the system. But by the study of this system we find that the system is so morally constituted that every individual is endowed with powers and opportunities and gets joys and sorrows in strict accordance with what he deserves through his own past actions. This principle of justice is inviolable. Every state of every individual had its past, and the state in the beginning of the present creation is no exception. This goes on *ad infinitum*. But as order and

harmony n the diversities of non-spiritual or non-intelligent objects is not possible without a powerful spiritual or intelligent regulator, and as *karma* and their consequences are non-intelligent, the regulatorship of God must be admitted. The position is this that under the regulatorship of God, the order of *karma* and its consequence consisting in the internal and external circumstances of the finite selves and those again giving rise to *karma* and that again producing consequence, is going on from eternity like the seed and the tree.

Critic—Here the whole argument is based on the supposition of the moral constitution of the universal system. But is there any unassailable ground for this supposition ? What do we find in our experience that can justify us in holding that the circumstances in which the individuals are placed and the joys and sorrows which they enjoy and suffer are the results of their own actions and in exact proportion to their deserts and merits ? The facts that lead to a contrary conclusion are not less numerous and less important than those that are in favour of this conclusion. We have already discussed this point. Hence as facts do not point to an inviolable moral order within the range of our experience, is it not an unwarrantable presumption to form the conception of a universal moral order on such a weak basis ? Not only that; the advocates of the theory have the audacity to imagine the existence of an infinite series of successive creations on the basis of this conception. Thus the entire structure of this theory appears to be building a huge edifice on the sand.

Now, as the conception of the moral order of the universe, even so far as the living beings are concerned, is not based on any sound logical foundation, the postulation of God for the explanation of this moral order is also without

any rational justification. As it is not established that the world-system is so constituted that virtue must be rewarded with happiness and vice must be punished with misery, what force can there be in the argument that for the proper dispensation of happiness and misery and favourable and unfavourable circumstances in exact proportion to the *karma* and deserts of the individual selves, there must be a supremely intelligent and powerful Spiritual Being, viz. God ?

That every state of existence must have a past is also an unsubstantiated proposition. So far as our experience goes, every state is of course preceded by a past state, but this is true within the world of our sense-experience. Are we justified in inferring from this that the entire world to which our life and experience belong, must have been preceded by another world, of which it is the effect, and that again by another world, and so on ?

The example of the seed and the tree is also out of place in this connection. The succession of the seed and the tree is established by perception, hence the infinite regression in this case is considered genuine and not as a fallacy. Where the cause-effect-relation between two phenomena is recognised, there to avoid interdependence the idea of beginninglessness in the shape of a continuous flow is taken as authentic. But in this case the infinite regression cannot be of such a character : God, *karma* and its moral consequences, are all unperceived and imperceptible entities and none of them is based on unassailable grounds of logical inference. So here the fault of infinite regression cannot be thus escaped. If at some previous time, we had experienced cause-effect-relation between two entities, then we wound have the notion that similar result would accrue even from objects not now experienced ; but objects not so

experienced at any time cannot help us to get any knowledge about them. That is to say, nothing definite will be known about them. So here there is no room for the recognition of a beginningless succession.*

From the above discussion it has been proved that if God gives results of *karma*, then because of the dependence

* Let us show here that there is no proof about universal dissolution (महाप्रलय). There cannot be any perception of such a dissolution by anybody, because without relation of objects with the active mind and senses, no perception is possible, and dissolution means the complete cessation of all activities of all minds and senses. If such a relation be admitted as possible in that state, then the said dissolution is no more. Nor is there any ground for the inference of such a dissolution. Through the analogy of dreamless sleep it can not be inferred. That state belongs to individual living beings. It cannot be said that it will apply to the whole universe. Nor can we infer that it will at some remote time come simultaneously, because there is no experience that all living beings pass into dreamless sleep at the same time. The dissolution cannot be inferred on the ground of a gradual lessening of the finite selves' capacity. This is an unproved allegation, because at every period when we experience the decay of the capacities of some beings, we experience the development of capacities in many others. There is no rational ground for inferring that a time will come when all living beings will pass into the state of death and all finite objects will pass into unmanifested state. Similarly there is no rational ground for inferring that such a state existed at any time in the past. The inference that the heterogeneous state of manifested diversities of the world presupposes a homogeneous state of unmanifested unity on the ground that all diversities are modified manifestations of some homogeneous principle, is not sound, because there is no reasonable ground to prove that the entire world had been at any period of time in an unmanifested state and afterwards becomes manifested in diverse forms. The logical presupposition, even if admitted, cannot prove a temporally prior existence of any entity. Nor can verbal testimony be a proof about dissolution. Because the trustworthiness of words is based on valid perception and inference, and because these two are absent in this case, verbal testimony cannot in this case be of any avail.

of God on *karma* of individual beings, the faults of inter-dependence, arguing in a circle, infinite regression and the valuelessness of the recognition of *karma* cannot be avoided.

Thus it is shown that the *Law of karma* cannot be established by any unassailable logical arguments and fails to explain consistently various facts, which its adherents believe it has the potency to explain.*

* We find that the diversities of the world are explained by some religious sects (e. g. Shaiva, Parsi, Jew, Christian and Mahomedan) (1) as the result of the sweet will of God alone ; some schools of philosophers (e. g Purva Mimāmsaka, Jaina and Buddhist) are of opinion that there is no God and that the beginningless course of diversities (2) is regulated by beginningless *karma* ; others (Shankarācharya and many others) hold that (3) God creates, sustains and determines the course of the beginningless world-process in accordance with the diverse *karma* of the eternal phenomenal selves ; there are some sects of worshippers (such as the Vaiṣnavas) who recognise the *Law of karma*, but do not look upon God as being wholly bound by such Law and (4) accept God's grace ; there are other philosophers (the Sānkhyas) who do not recognise God nor do they recognise *karma* as ultimate cause, but they accept (5) *Prakriti*, an unconscious Energy, as the ultimate explanation of all these diversified effects. As the result of Critical Examination of all these theories we find that none of them can be said to be bereft of logical defects

APPENDIX G.

The Various Applications of the Law of Karma Examined.

I.

Though the *Law of Karma* in the general sense, viz., that every individual self reaps the fruits of its own actions, is accepted by almost all systems of religion, the destinies of the selves as determined by this law are differently conceived by different systems.

(1) According to some schools of thought, every individual self, though essentially formless, passes through various forms of bodily existence, such as those of plants, reptiles, birds, beasts, etc., before it attains the form of a self-conscious human being. In accordance with the kinds of bodies through which it passes, it is sometimes unconscious, sometimes merely sentient without the power of locomotion and thought, sometimes sentient with the power of locomotion and without the power of thought, sometimes sentient and moving and thinking, and so on. In each of these stages of development, it has some forms of *karma*, which determine its future stages and the tendencies, activities, enjoyments and sufferings related to them. But in the sub-human stages, its actions are not self-conscious and self-determined in the sense in which they are so in the stage of human existence. But still it is held that the course of evolution of the mundane existence of each self in all these sub-human stages is governed by the moral *Law of Karma*. The evolution does not come to an end with attainment of the human body. At this stage actions are performed consciously, freely and deliberately with the preconception of means and ends. As the consequences of merits or demerits acquired by such actions, it sometimes becomes worthy of far more intense and durable

happiness or misery than it is possible to enjoy or suffer in this earthly mortal frame. Accordingly, the *Law of Karma* leads it to heaven or hell with bodies suitable for the enjoyment of such happiness or the suffering of such pain.

(2) Some other schools do not trace the development of the human existence out of the lower forms of existence. They hold that the lower species of living beings have no selves in them and the *Law of Karma* is not therefore operative in their case. The self appears in the world all at once in the human body, and through its actions in this body it becomes worthy of heaven or hell. The *Law of Karma* is regarded as administered by God, who will judge the merits and demerits of the actions of all individuals at some particular time and reward them with eternal heavenly bliss of eternal hellish sufferings. Between the time of death and the day of judgment, each individual remains in some subtle state without action or enjoyment or suffering awaiting their trial.*

* This is the view generally advocated by the Parsees, tho Jews, the Christians and the Moslems about the future of man.

Zoroastrian Doctrine —" The life of man falls into two parts,—its earthly portion and that which is lived beyond the grave. The lot assigned to him after death is the result and consequence of his life upon earth. No religion has so clearly grasped the ideas of guilt and merit. On the works of men here below a strict reckoning will be held in heaven (according to later representations by Rashnu and Mithra). All thoughts, words, and deeds of each are entered in the book as separate items (*dāthra* y 31, 14, *Vend.*, 19. 27), all the evil works as debts (*ishudō*). Wicked actions cannot be undone, but in the heavenly account can be counterbalanced by a surplus of good works. It is only in this sense that an evil deed can be atoned for by a good one. Of a remission of sins the doctrine of Zoroaster knows nothing. After death the soul arrives at the *cinvato peretush* or accountant's bridge over which lies the way to heaven. Here the statement of his life account is made out. If he has a balance of good works in his favour, he passes forthwith into paradise (*Garō demāna*) and the blessed life. If his evil works outweigh

(3) Some schools maintain that the heavenly enjoyments and the infernal sufferings, obtained in accordance with the *Law of Karma*, are not eternal, but temporary, and

his good he falls finally under the power of Satan, and the pains of hell are his portion for ever. Should the evil and the good be equally balanced, the soul passes into an intermediate stage of existence (the *Hamêstakans* of the Pahlavi books) and his final lot is not decided until the last judgment. This court of reckoning, the *judicium particulare*, is called *ăλa*. The course of inexorable law cannot be turned aside by any sacrifice or offering, nor yet even by the free grace of God."

(Taken from the Encyclopædia Britannica-Ninth edition-Vol. XXIV)

Jewish and Christian Speculations.—"The movement, freedom, joy of existence, ended for the Greek at death. ...The primitive Hebrew conception was even less tolerable than the Greek Sheol was, as originally conceived, a vast subterranean tomb, with the barred and bolted gates common to Hebrew tombs, in which the ghosts (Rephaim) did not even flit about, but lay like corpses in a sepulchre. No thought of retribution was connected with this deep and gloomy under-world. It was the common receptacle of all. The distinctions there were social or national, not moral. The only approach to a retributive idea is found in the exile time, in an expression of Ezekiel's, who locates the uncircumcised heathen in the "sides of the pit," possibly the deepest and darkest part of Sheol. This primitive idea had, by the time of Christ, developed under influences of a very different kind...At first it had been believed that Jehovah's control did not reach to the under-world. The King of Terrors was its only King. They who had been God's sheep when alive, in Sheol had a new shepherd, Death. But truer views of God's nature dissipated this horror, and pious souls who despaired of redress in this life, began to look even in Sheol for a manifestation of divine justice and a proof of divine love. At length was grasped the hope of a deliverance from the prison house of the dead, and the doctrine of the resurrection crowned this hope, and gave a definite shape to the eschatology of the Jews...So the Hebrews believed that the heathen and unjust would remain in the death-sleep of Sheol, while faithful Israel received back the soul in the resurrection. In different forms this thought reappears in Christian eschatology. Some find

the duration may vary according to the same law. They hold that the actions being limited by time and space and individual capacities, their results can never be eternal.

it in St Paul. It was the origin of the belief in a two-fold resurrection : the unjust, not being worthy to participate when the saints awake at their Lord's second coming, remain below till the final judgment. But in the post-exile days—that veritable middle age of Israel—other influences appeared. Intolerable wrongs drove men to seek solace for themselves in visions of paradise, vengeance on their foes in visions of hell. Now appear the divisions of Sheol into receptacles for the good and the bad. Their origin is seen in the apocalyptic book of Enoch. In chap. XXII. of that remarkable book, which, in the permanence of its influence as well as its form, resembles the *Inferno* of Dante, the seer is shown the "delightful places" where the souls of the good will be collected till judgment, and the "separations" existing between the just and unjust, "made by chasm, by water, by light above it." And here first is express mention of the "the castigation and the torment of those who eternally execrate and whose souls are punished and bound there for ever.".. ...

On the other side of Hades (hell becomes known as a part of Hades, or Sheol) was placed Paradise—a term whose origin is self-evident. Apocalyptic literature loved to imagine a restored Eden, and fill it with all the delights of sense—streams of milk and honey, twelve trees laden with divers fruits, mighty mountains whereon grow lilies and roses Prophetical language supplied other symbols of joy—especially the happy banquet with the forefathers of the race. In later times long controversies have turned on those localities ; the "minds at once logical and sensuous ask questions, and the answers are wildly conjectural ;" and no one can decide whether paradise, Abraham's bosom, and the third heaven are identical or different places...But we cannot pursue Jewish eschatology into all its fanciful recesses. Enough has been said to show that when our Lord (Jesus) came he found the doctrines of last things presented in forms already fixed, and the terms Gehenna, Paradise, &c., in familiar and even proverbial use. The popular views of a future state regard the use Jesus made of current terms as a sanction of their literal meaning.. (" Speculations regarding the after-life were prevalent among the ancient peoples, but the Christian teaching has

After the enjoyments in heaven or the sufferings in hell, the individuals again come down to this world of actions

its roots in the Old Testament and the apocryphal and apocalyptic literature"--Eschatology. Vol. V. Everyman's Encyclopaedia.)

There are still certain features of eschatological doctrine which requires notice. The notion of an Intermediate State was generally prevalent during the first three centuries. It was exactly analogous to the Jewish notion of a divided under-world The souls of the pious, says Justin, (D. c. Tryph, 5) take up their abode in a better, those of the wicked in a worse place. Tertullian, however, believed that the martyrs went direct to the bliss of heaven--a view probably founded on Rev. vii. 14, 15. The doctrine changed its shape many times. It produced an Arabian heresy combated by Origen, that both soul and body fall into a death-sleep, from which they will not awake to the last day. Revived at a later time, under the name Psychopannychy, it was made the subject of a treatise by Calvin But the existence of an intermediate state remains a dogma of the Eastern Church to this day. In the Western the doctrine of Purgatory gradually absorbed it."

(Eschatology. Vol. VIII. Ency. Brit.)

Mahomedan View:—"So far as the division of the world into Believers and Ubelievers applies, there seems no doubt that only the former can hope for the Moslem Paradise; thus even the Prophet's (the last prophet Mohammed's) uncle and protector, Abu Talib, was doomed to torment. Purgatory, then, is only for the Moslem who has earned punishment in the next world, and who, owing to his belief, will probably not be doomed eternally.

The *sanction* of Islam is in the first place the promise of Paradise and the menace of Hell. In dealing with such matters we are, to use Kant's phrase, overstepping the limits of human reason, whence consistency is impossible. On the one hand, then, the Moslem looks forward to a Day of Judgment, a definite termination of the present dispensation, and the substitution for it of another; on the other hand, it is clear that the Believer enters Paradise immediately after death, and the Unbeliever immediately is transferred to Hell There need be no inconsistency, because Time may well be an accident

with suitable bodies, capacities and opportunities, which also are determined by the remnants of previous *karma*, and get a fresh chance to perform actions. This process of going to the worlds of enjoyments or sufferings (heaven or hell) and coming again to this world of actions should go on according to the *Law of Karma*, until salvation or *Mukti*, which implies transcending the domain of *karma*, is attained.

(4) Others again hold that the ascent to heaven and the decent to hell are the results of specific types of virtuous and vicious deeds, while the courses of ordinary right and wrong actions and their results which can be enjoyed and suffered in the earthly bodies continue through birth after birth. Thus an individual self may pass through a large number of births and deaths, before it may ascend to the life of heavenly enjoyment by the performance of specially meritorious acts or fall to the state of infernal suffering on account of some specially heinous deeds.

Let us now consider the difficulties connected with the different modes of the application of the *Law of Karma* in determining the courses of the destinies of individual lives.

CRITICISM.

(1) With regard to the first view, what we actually experience is that there are various species of living beings in the world, and that these species may be arranged in some order in accordance with their points of similarity and dissimilarity and the different grades of the development of certain characteristics in them. But there is no proof that the same individual self passes from one species to another species. Neither by perception nor by inference nor by

of this life Both Paradise and Hell are painted realistically in the Koran, the former indeed too realistically for modern taste".

("D. S. Margolieuth's "Mohammedanism")

any other means of valid knowledge can it be known that any particular self which was in the form of a living being of one order exists after its death and becomes embodied in the form of a living being of the same or another order. Nor is there any sufficient ground for asserting, as some philosophers do, that one species develops in course of time into another species. Hence the conclusion that the human state of existence of a self is the result of a course of development through various animal states of existence in accordance with the *Law of Karma* has got no rational basis.

Again, how can the *Law of Karma* be applied to the determination of the destinies of irrational living beings, which can in no way be held responsible for their modes of life, or for the activities found in their lives. They are only creatures of nature and their operations are closely allied to the phenomena of nature; they are found to have no option, no freedom of choice, no self-consciousness and self-determination in the matter of what they do. How then can it be held that their lives are developed and degraded by and that they enjoy and suffer the consequences of their own actions?

Then again, in this hierarchy of living beings, there must be one species, which is the lowest of all. How can the differences in that species be accounted for by the *Law of Karma*? We have already examined and found the futility of the appeal to previous creations.

Moreover, is there any rational ground for asserting that every individual self must begin its course of mundane existence from the lowest form of life? No such ground is available, and such a supposition also would lead to inconsistencies. At every age of the world-process we find the existence of the lowest species of living beings. Hence according to this supposition we have to admit that at every age new selves are either coming into existence or are

coming from some free disembodied state of spiritual existence into the bondage of the embodied state of mundane existence. Both these alternatives being evidently unacceptable, it is to be supposed that at every age innumerable selves are degraded from the higher states to the lowest state. This also is not consistent with the doctrine of evolution. If the beginninglessness of the course of the mundane existence of every individual self is admitted, as it is generally held, then as the result of the progress of every self through infinite time the lowest species ought to have been gradually extinct and there was even the probability of all selves being delivered from mundane existence.

With regard to the doctrine of men's being led by *karma* to heaven or hell for more intense and durable enjoyment or suffering, and being endowed with bodies suitable to such enjoyment or suffering, here again an assumption is made, which is not based on any sound logical basis or demonstrable facts. What ground is there for asserting that a man with this gross material body under these worldly circumstances can perform such actions, the results of which are incapable of being enjoyed or suffered in this world with such a body and must be the causes of the production of superhuman bodies in supramundane regions for their enjoyment and suffering? The conception of heaven and hell also is not definite and uniform among the exponents of this theory. They also differ as to whether heaven is the ultimate destination of the individual self or there is fall from it and whether there is any way out of the hell or when once condemned to it one must eternally remain there. All these differences imply the weakness of the position. We shall discuss it further in the sequel.

(2) Those who do not believe in the evolution of the mundane existence of the self through numerous forms of living bodies hold that it has got its span of active life from its birth in the human body to the destruction of that body

and that it reaps the consequences of the actions of this single life eternally in heaven or hell.**

**We propose to place before the readers a free and candid examination of the main doctrines of the four great theistic non-Indian religious sects viz. Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. In this criticism we take for granted the nature of God and the relationship between God and man as conceived by those adherents. These conceptions are as follows.

1. Zoroastrianism :—(a)"The fundamental idea of the Zoroastrian creed is dualistic. At the beginning of things there existed two spirits—Ahuró Mazdão (Ormuzd) and Angró Mainyush (Ahriman)—who represented good and evil (*yasna,* 30.3). The existence of evil in the world is thus presupposed from all eternity Both spirits possess creative power, which manifests itself in the one positively and in the other negatively. Ormuzd is light and life and all that is pure and good,—in the ethical world law, order, and truth; his antithesis is darkness, filth, death, all that is evil in the world, lawlessness, and lies. When the two are spoken of as *yēma* ("pair"), this is not to be interpreted as meaning that they are twins: (Later sects sought to rise from the dualism to a higher unity. Thus the Zavanites represented Ormuzd and Ahriman as twin sons proceeding from the fundamental principle of all, Zrvana Akarana, or limitless time.' It simply denotes a duality, an opposed couple, a *dvandva.* The two spirits had until then counterbalanced one another. The ultimate triumph of the good spirit is an ethical demand of the religious consciousness and the quintessence of Zoroaster's revelation.

The evil spirit with his wicked hosts appears in the Gāthās much less endowed with the attributes of personality than does Ahura Mazda. Within the world of the good Ormuzd is Lord and God alone......Of other gods beside him the doctrine of the Gāthās knows nothing. The natural and symbolical gods of the popular belief have no place in it. Yet Ormuzd is not alone in his doings and conflicts, but has in conjunction with himself a number of genii—for the most part personifications of ethical ideas. These are his creatures, his instruments, servants, and assistants, like the ministers of an autocrat sovereign......Of the elements fire alone ("the son of Ahura Mazda") receives personification and figures as his ally.

Now, with regard to the first point the question is, does the self come into existence with the production of the body

As soon as the two at first absolutely separate spirits (comp. *Bundahish*, 1. 4,) encounter one another, their creative activity and at the same time their permanent conflict begin. The history of this conflict is the history of the world. A great cleft runs right through the world · all creation divides itself into that which is Ahura's and that which is Ahriman's. Not that the two spirits carry on the struggle in person : they leave it to be fought out by their respective creations and creatures which they send into the field. The field of battle is the present world

(Cosmogony —"In forty-five days, I, Ormuzd, aided by the Amschaspands, worked with care and created the heavens. In sixty days, I made water ; in seventy-five, the earth , in thirty, the trees ; in twenty, the animals, in seventy-five, man " —Quoted in "French views on Zoroastrianism ".)

In the centre of battle is man , his soul is the object of the war. Man is a creation of Ormuzd, who therefore has the right to call him to account. But Ormuzd created him free in his determinations and in his actions, wherefore he is accessible to the influences of the evil powers. (*Yasna* 31.11).......Man takes part in this conflict by all his life and activity in the world, By a true confession of faith, by every good deed, by continually keeping pure his body and his soul, he impairs the power of Satan and strengthen the might of goodness, and establishes a claim for reward upon Ormuzd , by a false confession, by every evil deed and defilement he increases the evil and renders service to Satan."

(Taken from "Zoroaster" in vol. XXIV Encyclopædia Britannica—Ninth edition.)

(*b*) "The leading idea of his (Zoroaster's) theology was *Monotheism*, i e. that there are not many gods, but only one, and the principle of his speculative philosophy *Dualism*, i. e the supposition of two primeval causes of the real world and of the intellectual, while his moral philosophy was moving in the *Triad* of thought, word and deed."

(M. Haug's "Essays on the sacred language, writings, and religion of the Parsees.")

or does it descend from the state of liberation into the state of bodily existence? If the former, then it ought to perish

II Judaism :—(*a*) "How far post-Exilian Judaism was moulded by Zarathustrian conceptions is a very difficult question; but no historical student can doubt that its cosmogony, its angelology, and even its anthropology, were largely modified by contact with Persia. But not only was Zarathustrianism active in and through Judaism. In itself, it spread westward, and became directly and indirectly both a precursor and a parent of Gnostic speculation. Certain forms of Gnosticism seem little else than adaptations of the Persian dualism to the solution of the great problem of good and evil. In other forms of it, again, the Pantheism of India seems to have been a pervading influence. This, too, has its representative in the Jewish schools of the time in the secret doctrines of the Kabbala, which many carry considerably beyond the time of Christ."

(Gnosticism in Vol X Ency. Brit.).

(*b*) "The first article of the creed is the belief that God is one, alone and incomparable .. .The serving of other gods is the gravest offence against God ....Closely allied to the belief in the unity of God, is the love of God. The love is reciprocal...To the Jew, therefore, the ideal to strive for, is the imitation of God. God is good, righteous, just, and merciful. Man must be good, righteous, just and merciful..... Man is governed by the will of God, but he is also a free agent. His knowledge, on which his faith is to rest, enables him to distinguish between right and wrong, and thus he is responsible for his actions and their moral quality......But God is not a stern and implacable Judge. The relationship is rather that of Father and Son .....Vicarious atonement which Jesus brought to mankind, is an idea opposed to the spirit of Judaism The belief of the Jew was, and is, that every man shall die for his own sin, that no intermediary between himself and God is required; God being a God of justice and mercy, delights when the wicked turns from his evil ways and seeks pardon......The doctrine of original sin is un-Jewish....Finally, the incarnation, and the doctrine of the Trinity made the Unity of God unintelligible to the Jew. It is on the Unity of God that Judaism rests."

(E. Levine's "Judaism").

III. Christianity :—(*a*) "The God of the Old Testament (the Bible of the Jews) is also the God of the New (the Bible of the

with the body and there is no ground for believing that it will exist eternally in a disembodied state, whether in

Christians). Christ and the apostles accepted what Moses and the prophets had taught concerning God; they assigned to Him no other attributes than had already been assigned to Him. Like Moses and the prophets also they made no attempt formally to prove the existence or logically to define the nature of God, but spoke of Him either as from vision or inspiration. . God is represented in the New Testament as revealing His fatherhood through His Son, Jesus Christ...According to the New Testament, God is not merely infinitely exalted above the world and definitely distinguished therefrom, nor merely immanent and everywhere operative in nature, but also incarnate in Christ ("The Logos, eternally divine, then became also essentially human, so that Christ was perfect God and perfect Man; one not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God"—Incarnation. Vol VII Everyman's Encyclopaedia) God is exhibited in the New Testament as the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, who dwells in the spirits of men, to work in them the will of the Father, and to conform them to the image of the Son."

(Theism—in Vol. XXIII Ency. Brit)

(*b*) " The philosophical idea that matter is the source of evil, that matter has always some stubborn element in it by which it can defy the ideal, gave rise to a whole series of ancient and mediæval heresies. The Gnostics in all their various sects distinguished between God and the Creator. The good God, they held, could not defile Himself by contact with matter, and therefore could not be the God of creation and providence Christian theology, on the other hand, has always confessed God to be the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, and all things seen and unseen, and the necessity for such a doctrine of creation consists in the fact that the Christian consciousness demands the absence of any thing that might come in between God and the furtherance of His plan of salvation. It demands that all things be thought of as dependent on God, in order that He may be able to make all things work together for the good of His people, and so it has strenuously asserted the doctrines of creation and providence in opposition to an independent matter and the reign of fate."

("Heresy" in Vol. XI. Ency. Brit.)

heaven or in hell. Further, according to the principle that whatever is produced or has a beginning of existence must be of the nature of a changing phenomenon and must have a phenomenal cause, the self also must, according to this view, be of the nature of a phenomenon and be the product.

IV **Mohammedanism** :—(*a*) "They (professors of Mussulman theology) employed a quasi-philosophical method, by which, according to Maimonides, they first reflected how things ought to be in order to support, or at least not contradict, their opinions, and then, when their minds were made up with regard to this imaginary system, declare that the world was no otherwise constituted. ...God is the sole cause or agent in the universe; it is He who, directly, or by the mediation of His ministering angels, brings everything to pass. The supposed uniformity and necessity of causation is only an effect of custom, and may be at any moment rescinded. In this way, by a theory which, according to Averroes, involves the negation of science, the Moslem theologians, believed that they had exalted God beyond the limits of the metaphysical and scientific conceptions of law, form, and matter; whilst they at the same time stood aloof from the vulgar doctrines, attributing a causality to things. Making the uniformity of nature a mere phantom due to our human customary experience, they deemed they had left a clear ground for the possibility of miracles."

(Arabian Philosophy in Vol. II. Ency. Brit.)

(*b*) "Man is a free agent within his limited sphere: The ordinances of God lay down the eternal principles of human conduct. He has pointed out two courses—the one leading away from Him, and that is *evil*; the other bringing man to Him, and that is *good*. Every individual is free to choose and follow whichever course he likes, and receives his deserts accordingly. A belief in the unity, power, mercy, and supreme love of the Creator is the cardinal principle of Islam." (Its cardinl tenet is distinctly anti-trinitarian).

(Ameer Ali's "Islam")

In the above-mentioned four religions we find similarity of ideas about God, Angels and Satan, theory of creation and destruction and about the last judgment day and the Resurrection of the body at the time of the last judgment (at the time of the grand act of resurrection God will make the life everlasting)

of some cause. Such an entity cannot be conceived as being endowed with eternal life after death. Moreover, in that case, at the very time of their coming into existence, different selves must have different characteristics, which would compel them to live different modes of life and perform different kinds of good and evil actions. As these characteristics are not the products of their own *karma*, they ought not, according to the *Law of Karma* itself, to enjoy happiness or suffer misery for the manifestations of these characteristics in actions. If God be regarded as the creator of these selves, He must be held responsible for their divergent characters, and hence for their actions as well as the so-called consequences of their actions. Consequently He cannot be conceived as the Dispenser of justice, rewarding virtue and punishing vice of those finite selves. The doctrine assumes a dreadful appearance when it is held that these created selves may suffer inconceivable miseries eternally in hell as a result of such vices perpetrated in this life. The difficulties increase considerably, when we think of the cases of abortions, still-born children and those who die in infancy or early youth. Should it be affirmed that they also acquire sufficient merits for going to eternal heaven or sufficient demerits for going to eternal hell, as the result of their unconscious or conscious actions in the mother's womb or the lying-in-room or the play-ground. Is it the application of the *Law of Karma* ? We need not discuss this obviously untenable view further.

If, on the other hand, the individual selves are conceived as coming down into the state of human existence from some state of liberation (whatever the exact nature of that state may be, whether in God or by the side of God or in some unrelated or detached condition or in some spiritual world), then also the divergent characters of the psycho-physical organisms and the environmental circumstances in which they are put at the time of their birth cannot be regarded as the consequences of their own *karma*, and they

cannot be held responsible for the different kinds of activities that follow from them. Hence it is meaningless to say that their enjoyments and sufferings are regulated by the *Law of Karma*. If the mental, physical and external conditions are the creations of God, if the omnipotent and omniscient Creator and Governor of the world deliberately associated the originally innocent and pure particular selves with different kinds of conditions at the time of their birth, He must be regarded as having intended the diverse kinds of so-called virtuous and vicious deeds to be performed by them and therefore as the real doer of those actions. In that view of the case, He cannot have any reasonable right to pass moral judgment upon those individual selves, and reward some and punish others for doing what He made them do. If it be held that the divergent inner and outer conditions which exercise influence upon the modes of lives of the selves and cause them to perpetrate sins are the creations of Satan, and not of God, then on the one hand God cannot be thought of as the sole unrivalled omnipotent creator and regulator of the universe, and on the other He should not, as the just and righteous judge, punish the selves for the sins for which Satan, who is uncontrollable even by Him, is responsible. As the executor of the *Law of Karma*, He ought not to inflict miseries upon one for the deeds of another, here Satan being the producer of the evils, why should He inflict miseries upon the innocent selves? Why should there be the eternal damnation of a child without any will of its own for a sin committed six thousand years before the child came into existence. Hence the *Law of Karma* must be said to be violated.

Then again, since new men are being born in the world every moment, it must be held according to this theory that new selves are being constantly brought down from the pure faultless liberated state into the embodied state of mundane existence and placed under the influences of Satan or at least sin-producing physical and moral conditions.

What *Law of Karma* regulates these new births of the innocent selves? Does it not imply the will of God that the pure individual selves should not eternally remain in the peaceful and blissful liberated state, but that they must be subjected to the Satanic influences and made to undergo changes of states and suffer miseries? Does it not imply further that the selves, which are allowed to pass through virtuous deeds into the blissful liberated state in heaven from this mundane life, should have the possibility of being sent down again and again into this world and subjected to sins and miseries? What is the ground for asserting that those selves which once passed through the mundane life should not pass through it again and that newer and newer selves must always be sent down for tasting the fruits of mundane existence? Thus the doctrine of eternal bliss in heaven at the end of one pious life in the world cannot be consistently maintained in accordance with this theory. Moreover, if there be an infinite number of individual selves at the disposal of God for being sent down to the world, what is the law by which the turn of each to fall under these Satanic influences be determined? Is there any law other than the law of chance or the law of the caprice of God? These are of course no laws, and certainly not the *Law of Karma.*

Further, many of these selves, after passing through the mundane state, are said to become worthy of dire punishment on account of their sins in this life, and they are regarded as condemned by God to eternal hell. What it implies is this:—pure selves, which had originally been in the faultless and blissful spiritual or supermundane state, is unaccountably dragged down by chance or Divine caprice into the mundane state, subjected to Satanic conditions of this life, made to commit sins and then led to the dreary dungeon of hell for suffering eternal misery. This career of the unfortunate selves must of course be admitted to be designed for them by the infinitely benevolent and merciful

God. The poor helpless creatures are not even allowed to have a second chance of human existence to mend their lives and fight with the Satanic influences and become worthy of returning to heaven. Obviously such a conception of God and of the law of His creation and regulation of the world-process cannot be acceptable to any rational mind. (See foot-note pages 285–286.)

(3) There are different conceptions about heaven and hell. Some hold that heaven and hell are the two eternal destinations of the selves, attained as the final results of the good and bad actions of the human life. Others hold that heaven is eternal, but hell is temporary. They think that if heaven can be reached through virtuous actions, there is no fear of further mundane existence and the result-producing actions and consequent sufferings pertaining to it. If on account of impious actions performed in this life, any self goes to hell, it returns to mundane life after the miseries it deserved for those actions have been suffered, and gets fresh chances for performing new virtuous actions. Others again maintain that heavenly life and infernal life are both transitory. According to them, the merits and demerits acquired through virtuous and vicious actions are exhausted by enjoyments and sufferings in heaven and hell respectively, and the selves have to return to the active mundane state again for the performance of fresh actions.

Now, all these views are beset with difficulties. We have already noticed the logical and moral difficulties pertaining to the doctrine of the endlessness of the enjoyments in heaven and the sufferings in hell as the results of the virtuous and vicious actions of the few years or the few days that an individual self lives in this human body in the midst of the various kinds of internal and external circumstances, many of which it has not the capacity to control.

The second view, viz., that the reward of virtue in heaven is permanent, while the penalty for vice in hell is

for a limited period, is more acceptable to the heart, because it offers bright prospects to the virtuous and does not make the lives of the vicious absolutely hopeless. But the doubts and difficulties which arise in the rational mind with regard to the very possibility of such rewards and punishments are not solved. Both merits and demerits are the moral effects of the particular transitory actions of human life. It is unintelligible how the consequence of the merits can be permanent, while that of the demerits should be impermanent. As the causes belong to the same plane of existence, the effects also ought reasonably to belong to the same plane. If the plane of the suffering of the effects of vice be such that there is return to the active mundane stage from it, why should the plane of the enjoyment of the effects of virtue be such that there is no return from it ?

Again, do heaven and hell both belong to the plane of the phenomenal existence of the self or not ? Since both are constituted for giving the selves the fruits of their actions in phenomenal life, there ought to remain the identity of the doers of the actions and the reapers of their fruits according to the *Law of Karma.* Hence the existence of the self both in heaven and in hell ought to be phenomenal, and it ought to have a beginning and an end and it ought to be subject to change. Accordingly, as there is return from hell, so there should be return from heaven. If this is not admitted, then both the existence in heaven and the existence in hell should be perpetual.

The next question that arises is,—what is the true conception of heaven and hell ? Are they really different regions above or below the earth—real places of enjoyment and suffering situated somewhere in space ? Or are they merely different mental planes or subtle states of the existence of the selves under the bondage of *karma* ? The exponents of the view are not generally quite clear in their exposition of this point. The reason for this obscurity is that

there is no rational proof by which the existence of heaven and hell or the heavenly and hellish conditions of the selves after death can be demonstrated. However, even admitting them, no ground can be offered for believing in the perpetuity of the results of good actions and the impermanence of the results of the bad actions.

Hence there is a third view according to which all actions, whether good or bad, produce temporary results. The demerits of bad actions as well as the merits of good actions are exhausted through sufferings and enjoyments. Consequently the enjoyments of heaven as well as the sufferings of hell must be for a limited period. After such enjoyments and sufferings there must again and again be return to this world of activities for the performance of fresh actions and the acquisition of fresh deserts. This should go on in the case of every self, till it is liberated from the bondage of *karma*.

This conception is of course more consistent with the *Law of Karma*, provided that there is any proof of the existence of heaven and hell or the heavenly enjoyments and infernal sufferings. But such proof is nowhere available. The fundamental idea behind the doctrine, viz. that the selves, by their virtuous or vicious actions in the human bodies, acquire merits or demerits, the rewards or punishments for which cannot be enjoyed or suffered in such bodily states in this world, but require some altogether different kinds of bodies in some different regions for those enjoyments and sufferings,—is an assumption, for which no necessity can be proved. Thus there is neither any satisfactory proof of their existence nor any unavoidable necessity for assuming their existence. Hence the theory must be regarded as a gratuitous hypothesis. As a matter of fact, the belief in heaven and hell is based on scriptural evidence, the logical value of which we have considered on numerous occasions.

With regard to the conception of heaven and hell, there is no unanimity among the different scriptures, upon which different religious sects rely. Some describe them as different regions in space, to which the disembodied selves go and having assumed particular types of bodies enjoy or suffer as the results of their *karma*. Others regard them as different planes of the existence of the disembodied selves, having no necessary relation to spatial regions. Others seem to indicate that heaven consists in the intense and durable happiness of the human life, and hell consists in the acute and durable misery. Again, some scriptures speak of heaven and hell in general terms and seem to indicate that heaven is one and hell also is one. Others elaborately describe different grades of heavenly regions or planes, such as *Swarga, Mahah, Jana, Tapah, Satya,* each having its special features, and the higher ones requiring higher orders of merits for the selves to attain them. Similarly they describe different grades of infernal regions or planes for the punishment of more and more heinous sins. All these are incapable of any empirical or rational proof and are mere matters of faith.

(4) We now pass to the views of those, who hold that the individual selves do not go to heaven or hell as the result of their ordinary right or wrong actions and virtuous or vicious modes of life in this single human state of existence. According to them the ascent to heaven is the consequence of specially meritorious acts, such as particular forms of *sacrifice* or devotional service or philanthropic work. Similarly, the descent to hell is the consequence of specially sinful deeds. These indicate special efficacies of special types of *karma*. Ordinarily the *Law of Karma* leads to the births and rebirths of the individual selves in accordance with the merits and demerits of their acts. The same individual self may have to take a large number of births, in which it enjoys and suffers the consequences of its previous right and wrong actions and at the same time gets the opportunity

of performing fresh actions. It passes through innumerable births and deaths in this world of actions. Sometimes the death of one body is immediately followed by the assumption of another body in the womb of another mother. Sometimes between the death and the new birth, the self may pass through some intermediate conditions in subtle or ghostly bodies. Sometimes, if some specially meritorious or heinous acts have been done in the life, the death may be followed by a long period of enjoyment in heaven or suffering in hell, and then after the exhaustion of special merits or demerits the new birth may be taken. All these are regulated by the *Law of Karma*.

Now, with regard to the first part of the view, the only evidence available is the scriptural evidence. There is no means of rationally demonstrating that particular form of sacrifice performed in accordance with scriptural instructions have such a magical power as to make a man worthy of heaven. The illustrations cited are all of a legendary character. Such is also the case with what are regarded as the causes of sufferings in hell. The believers in the particular scriptures, which are the sources of this doctrine, must admit all these as beyond the scope of reason and as matters of implicit faith; while those who do not believe in the evidential value of those particular scriptures cannot be condemned if they regard them as fictions of imagination.

II.

Let us now proceed to the question of Re-birth. It has to be ascertained whether it is a question of fact or a question of theory. If it is to be dealt with as a question of fact, it has to be proved on the strength of perception or memory or reliable testimony. That normal perception of Re-birth is not possible is obvious, because neither the previous birth nor the future birth can be an object of perception. With regard to memory, it is universally agreed that men in general have no remembrance of any pre-natal state

of existence, not to speak of any *previous state of bodily* existence. But some exceptional instances may be cited. It is very rarely found that some persons, mostly of tender age, speak of events of their previous birth and these events are verified. The lives of these persons are not always found to be of a superior order. But the special capacity of describing the events of the life of another person, who died previously and who might have been an inhabitant of a distant unknown place, is found to be developed in a boy or girl of this type. The events are described as the events of his or her own previous life. If these exceptional instances are accepted as cases of remembrance, then of course the possibility of re-birth at least in the case of some individual selves becomes undeniable. But they cannot prove that re-birth is the general law for all individuals. Here a question may arise, why should the cases of such remembrance be so exceptional? What law governs this remembrance? It is not found that the mental capacity of these few persons is of an exceptionally superior order. In all other matters they are found to belong to the ordinary run of people. According to what law can their mind be the possessor of a knowledge, which is denied to men in general? Thus if this is a case of real remembrance, it would be a mysterious mental phenomenon. Now, is there any incontrovertible proof that it is a case of remembrance? Is it not possible that such a boy or girl mysteriously identifies himself or herself with a dead person and the events of the latter's life are reproduced before his or her vision? There is no way out of some mysterious element involved in whatever explanation may be offered, and hence it cannot be regarded as a positive proof of actual re-birth.

Another type of exceptional instances is supplied by the remembrances of some *yogins*. But among the *yogins* of a high order of spiritual development, only a few speak of the remembrance of their past lives. It is said to be the result of a particular form of yogic practice. Whether the

visions, arising from a particular type of practice, before the minds of a few *yogins* can be accepted as a sufficient reliable testimony for the general law of re-birth is a controvertible point. Thus we get no definite proof that re-birth is a fact.

Some philosophers have attempted to establish re-birth as a theory and have adduced arguments for inferring it. It has been said that all children are born with the capacity and tendency of sucking the mother's breast, all men have the fear of death, and so on. It is argued that this would not have been possible if they had not formed the habit of sucking the mother's milk, and experienced the terrificness of death in previous lives, and been born in this life with their impressions. It is obvious that such arguments cannot convincingly prove re-birth. All creatures in this world are born with some general instincts common to all and some specific instincts characteristic of the particular species to which they belong. The instinct of self-preservation, of which the fear of death is a particular expression, is universally present in all living beings, from the lowest to the highest. This being the universal characteristic of all living creatures cannot indicate the memory of death experienced in any past life. Similarly, particular species of creatures are endowed with particular types of capacities and tendencies, and every creature born in any particular species inherits them. What are the causes of the differences among the different species and what are the laws according to which different species are created or evolved is a different question, that need not be dealt with here. But these facts cannot prove that the particular creatures themselves developed them in their nature by experiences and efforts in past lives. Further, such inference would lead to *regressus ad infinitum*. Moreover, there would be no explanation for the appearance of such specific instincts and capacities and tendencies in those that are born for the first time as men whether the doctrine of evolution or special creation is adopted.

Some philosophers infer the truth of re-birth on the ground of the widely different tendencies and powers of men born under similar circumstances, and even of children of the same parents. These individual distinctions, they hold, can be accounted for only by reference to the acquisitions of the individual selves in the previous state of bodily existence. But this argument is based on the hypothesis that every individual is what it has made itself by dint of its previous efforts and experiences and that this making is possible only in some previous life. But such a hypothesis itself is unverifiable. We actually find inborn differences in powers and tendencies among individuals, as we find points of similarity also. Such diversities we experience not only in the human race, but also in the lower species of creatures. In nature there are similarities as well as differences. There is no adequate ground for asserting that each distinctive feature of every individual being must be the effect of its own experience and acquisition in the past. There may be a variety of combinations of circumstances' that may produce such distinctive features. Hence the above argument is too weak to establish re-birth.

Mereover, we find that all mental functions, including the retentions of previously acquired ideas and tendencies and capacities, are dependent upon a brain and a nervous system and favourable physiological conditions. The operations of the mind, apart from the brain and the nervous system, are nowhere experienced. If the brain is suddenly paralysed, the mind ceases to act. How can we then demonstrate that even after the body with the brain and the nervous system is burnt to ashes, the mind exists in the disembodied state with all the previously acquired capacities and tendencies and ideas and builds up in the womb of another mother a new body with a brain and a nervous system suited to their manifestations?

Some offer a moral argument for the establishment of re-birth. It is said that most men are found to die with

desires unsatisfied, with actions commenced, but unfinished, with the demands of moral nature unfulfilled, with characters in the process of development, but not fully developed, and so on. It is, they hold, just and proper that they should be given a fresh opportunity for the fulfilment of the demands of their lives. Since the selves are moral beings and the world is a moral order, such opportunities must come to them in the form of life after life, till the state of fulfilment is reached. Now, this argument makes many assumptions, none of which can be rationally demonstrated. There is no adequate basis for the assumption that the world-order must furnish every individual self with opportunities after opportunities for the fulfilment of the demands of its mundane existence. The moral purpose of the world-order also cannot be logically demonstrated. Even if these assumptions be granted, it cannot be asserted that a plurality of births is the only necessary means for serving the end. It may require the postulate of the continuity of life after death, but it does not necessitate the belief in re-birth in this world again and again in such gross material bodies.

Thus all the arguments in favour of re-birth fall short of logical proof. Hence no definite conclusion can be obtained with regard to this question and it cannot be strongly asserted that birth after birth is a necessary factor in the operation of the *Law of Karma.**

* With regard to the doubts and difficulties that arise in connection with the assumption, by a departed individual self, of ghostly bodies and its existence in the ghostly state for any period in accordance with the *Law of Karma*, we content ourselves with two quotations from the two specialists on the subject.

(*a*) ... .."The popular, savage and ancient theory of these phenomena was that the people thus affected were inspired by a god or spirit, or "possessed" by a demon or a dead man. Science now regards the gods or demons or spirits as mere exhibitions of the secondary personality, which wakens when the normal personality slumbers. The knowledge and faculties of the secondary personality,

far exceeding those exhibited in the normal state, are explained to a great extent by the patient's command, when in the secondary state, of resources latent in the memory. The same explanation is offered for other phenomena, like those of automatic writing, knocking out answers by tilting tables, or discovering objects by aid of the "divining rod." The muscular actions that tilt the table, or wag the rod or direct the pencil or planchette, are unconsciously made, and reveal the latent stores of subconscious knowledge, so that a man writes or knocks out information which he possessed, but did not suspect himself of possessing......The whole of this vast field of the unconscious, or subconscious, or subliminal self has been especially examined by Myers, and by such psychologists as Ribot, Janet, Richet, Flournoy and many others The general result is a normal explanation not yet complete, of the phenomena hitherto attributed to witchcraft, inspiration, possession, and so forth. Probably the devils, saints, angels and spirits, who have communicated with witches, living saints, demoniacs and visionaries are mere hallucinatory reflections from the subconscious self, endowed with its store of latent memories and strangely acute percipient faculties. Thus a curious chapter of human history is at last within possible reach of explanation."

(Andrew Lang's "Psychical Research" in The Encyclopædia Britannica-eleventh Edition Vol 22)

(*b*) "It (Telepathy) was defined as 'communication between one mind and another otherwise than through the known channels of the senses.' . Even if the difficulty about the limits of hyperæsthesia is not raised, and if it is admitted that the possibilities of communication through the senses may be taken as fairly completely explored, we are impelled to develop such a definition in one of two directions. We may imagine some unknown sort of vibration, radiation, or 'brain-wave', as a physical explanation of the phenomena alleged, undeterred by the facts that no positive support has yet been found for any such agency, and that, unlike physical forces, it would appear to be indifferent to distance ; or else we may conceive telepathy as essentially psychic in its nature, and shall then tend to exalt it into a fundamental 'law' of spiritual being, as Myers himself subsequently inclined to do. But, so conceived, it is manifestly a challenge to further exploration of the spiritual world of which it claims to be

a law; and yet it proves rather a double-edged weapon for believers in a spiritual world. It enables them indeed to hold that every mind, incarnate or discarnate, may in principle communicate directly with any other by telepathy; but it seems to formulate this possibility so broadly as to render it almost impossible for a discarnate mind to authenticate itself by communicating information For any verifiable information must normally be, or have been, known to incarnate minds; and, if any living mind can 'tap' any other, and if knowledge can 'leak' subconsciously from any mind to any other, and still more if we entertain the somewhat fanciful but not unsupported hypothesis that all knowledge may be pooled in a vast 'cosmic reservoir' before it bubbles up in individual minds, the telepathic hypothesis can evidently be used to discredit nearly all the *prima facie* evidence in favour of 'spirit-communication'. ...Still it should be remembered that to ascribe these phenomena to telepathy is a hypothesis which is possible only if telepathy is established independently by experimental evidence. Accordingly it is on this that the real stress falls. Now, as regards this evidence, it may be said in general that its character is very similar to that for other supernormal phenomena. Much of it is bad, some respectable, none beyond cavil Its quality is not better than that of the best evidence for some of the most extreme phenomena, such as 'materializations.' It is liable, moreover, to the same or similar sources of error, fraud (in the shape of codes, collusion, and mendacity), mal-observation, lapses of attention, errors of memory, coincidence. The ultimate reason for these defects is that there plainly does not exist as yet any real experimental control of the phenomena and their conditions, so that the evidence cannot be accumulated at will, crucial experiments cannot be made, and the pragmatic test cannot be used to *apply* the doctrine of the direct intercommunication of minds and to distinguish the real from the alleged phenomena."

(Schiller's "Telepathy" in Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics Vol XII.)

CONCLUSION.

The position we arrive at as the result of our examination of the various attempts, that have been made by the different religio-philosophical systems, to formulate the *Law of Karma*, may be stated thus:— Man as a moral being, endowed with the consciousness of ought and ought-not, right and wrong, good and evil, and moved by the conception of some ideal or ideals capable of being realised by dint of his own voluntary efforts, cannot but form the idea of a law by which his destiny may be regulated in accordance with his own moral deeds, the results of his past efforts may not be lost to him, and he may himself reap the beneficial and injurious consequences of his own right and wrong actions. This idea of the law of justice evolves out of his moral nature. But as he has to live and act, enjoy and suffer, advance in the path of the realisation of his cherished ideal or ideals and fulfil the demands of his complex nature, in this world-system, he cannot but think that the law which his moral nature demands must also be a law of the world-order. This has given rise to the conception of the *Law of Karma*. It is a belief in the principle of justice underlying the course of the phenomena of our life and the world. Man as a moral being cannot shake off this belief and hence cannot but formulate some such law. But when attempts are made for the definite formulation of this law and for its detailed application to the various phenomena of our life, we are faced with lots of logical and practical difficulties, which become insoluble,—hypotheses after hypotheses have to be framed and none of them can be verified or put on a rational basis. Thus the rational mind of man finds itself in a position, in which it can neither give up the belief in the *Law of Karma* nor can accept it in any definite form. The problem remains unsolved and mysterious.

CHAPTER VII.

The Idea of the Self.

Man experiences himself as a self-conscious and self-determining embodied being. The idea of the self or ego or "I," is involved in all his experiences,—in all his cognitions, emotions, volitions and actions. What is the nature of the self ? With regard to this problem the human reason is faced by various alternative possibilities, each of which can be—and, in fact, has been—put forward with some degree of plausibility and can offer some sort of explanation for the psychological experiences about the self. First, the self may be regarded either as a stable permanent entity underlying all the bodily and mental states and processes, or it may be regarded as a mere continuous flow or stream of consciousness without any permanent substratum. Secondly, the consciousness of the self, as we experience it, may be regarded as a particular function or product of the physical organism, or the self may be viewed as some entity altogether different from this organism. Thirdly, the self may be conceived as produced with the body and destroyed with the body, or it may be conceived as without production and destruction, without birth and death, and as capable of existing in the embodied as well as in the disembodied state. Fourthly, the self may be regarded as essentially conscious by itself or becoming conscious through contact with the mind, which is distinguished from itself. Fifthly, it may be regarded as essentially capable of knowing, feeling, willing and acting, or it may be conceived as a merely self-luminous entity having no function of its own except that in its presence the mind and its functions are illuminated. Sixthly, it may be

regarded as an absolutely changeless entity or as a entity retaining its identity through modification. Seventhly, it may be conceived as having the magnitude of an atom or the magnitude of the body in which it exists or an unlimited all-pervading magnitude. Eightly, different individuals may be supposed to have really different selves or one universal self may be supposed to appear as different selves in different individuals. In this way, various views may be held, and are actually held by different religious sects, about the nature of the self which we all experience within ourselves. Let us examine some typical views.

I. Self conceived as identical with the body:—

A. Exposition :—

According to some classes of thinkers, it is the sentient bodily organism which experiences itself as the self or ego. The consciousness, according to this view, is a function of this material body. The material elements, being combined and organised in a particular way in accordance with natural laws, give rise to consciousness, and this consciousness expresses itself in the form of the consciousness of the self or ego as well as the consciousness of objects. There is no non-material spiritual self, really distinct from the physical organism. The so-called self is born with the birth of this body, is developed with the development of the body, and dies with the death, i. e. the disorganisation and dissolution, of the body. The living body adapts itself to its enviornments, and in this process of adaptation it behaves in particular ways. The thoughts, feelings and desires also are forms of behaviour of the sentient living body. The consciousness, including the consciousness of the self is a by-product of this behaviour.

B. Criticism :—

This materialistic view about the nature of the self cannot stand the logical test. The advocates of this view can offer no rational explanation as to how consciousness can be a product or a function of the essentially unconscious material body. Consciousness and unconsciousness are two fundamentally contradictory qualities. The same body cannot be naturally conscious and unconscious at the same time. If, as it is admitted, unconsciousness is the fundamental characteristic of matter, it can never by itself become conscious or produce consciousness. It is argued by the materialists that we actually observe in the material world the production, by chemical combination, of compound bodies with characteristics altogether different from those of the component causes. It is further pointed out that articles of food are transformed into animal tissues, that inorganic lifeless material substances are by nature organised into living bodies of plants, and so on. But the kinds of instances cited by them are not quite to the point. The products of chemical combination are not essentially of different natures from the combining elements. It can not produce bodies without weight from bodies with weight, or bodies without extension from bodies with extension, or bodies with life and consciousness from bodies without life and consciousness. In all cases of chemical combination material bodies are produced from material substances, there being some points of difference among their attributes, and these points of difference being never comparable to that between consciousness and unconsciousness. With regard to the transformation of dead food-articles into living animal tissues and the like, this is nowhere found to occur except when the articles are eaten and assimilated by living animals. Unless the lifeless substances can

be observed to be capable of spontaneous self-transformation into living tissues of animal bodies independently of the operation of the life-power of any animal, or unless the absence of any such life-power in the animal, distinct from the material ingredients of the animal-body and controlling the transformation of the food-articles within the body, can be established on some other independent grounds, the lifeless food-substances cannot be regarded as the sole causes of the living tissues. The examples of this kind also are therefore of no avail to prove the production of a self-conscious body from purely unconscious material entities. The production of living organisms out of inorganic matter also demands proof and cannot be presented as an observed fact. In experience we always find that life comes out of life, that a living seed produced from a living plant absorbs and assimilates the material ingredients necessary for its self-preservation and self-development, that a living insect born of another living insect takes food from the material environments, and so on. We never experience any inorganic matter transforming itself into a living seed or a living insect. Even if instances of matter developing, transforming and organising itself into living bodies be discovered, then the conception of matter will be changed. Matter in that case will have to be conceived as essentially endowed with the power of self-development, self-transformation and self-organisation; this would amount to the assertion that matter is essentially *living* and that what we now experience as inorganic lifeless matter only represents the unmanifested or undeveloped state of the essential character of matter, viz. life-power.

Thus there is no logical ground for maintaining that consciousness is or can possibly be the product or function

or property of the material body, which is by supposition essentially unconscious.

Moreover, the material body is regarded as an object of perception and its nature is conceived as consisting of the properties perceived in it. But does not this conception of a material body presuppose a perceiving subject? If the perceiving subject, i. e. the conscious self, be regarded as the product of the material body, then the latter must be supposed to be existent before the production of the former, and in that case the material body must have a nature independently of its perceptible properties. The existence of such a material body is inconceivable. Even if its existence is somehow conceived or imagined, it must be altogether of a different character from the material body as perceived. Its nature would really be unknown and unknowable to the power of perception which originates from it. It may be said that there are various material bodies, which are unconscious, which are not perceived by themselves, in which the power of perception has not been produced; but their existence cannot be denied. This is no doubt true; what do their characters consist of? If their characters consist of the perceptible properties,—whether particular individuals perceive some particular material bodies or not, it does not affect the question,—they must be what they are in relation to and as the objects of the power of perception, i. e. a conscious subject, and apart from this relation they must be regarded as either non-existent or characterless or having some kind of unknowable existence and character. Thus, since the material body, as we know it and can possibly conceive it, must be admitted to have its existence and specific nature only in relation to and as the object of the conscious subject, the conscious subject or the

self cannot be consistently regarded as the product of the material body.

If it be said that the body, especially in its subtlest part, viz. the brain, is endowed with the power of knowing, feeling and willing, then the body as a whole can no longer be consistently regarded as essentially a material body, because it virtually amounts to the recognition of the presence of some conscious power along with the material elements within the body and there is no ground for regarding the latter as the cause of the former.

Again, if the consciousness of the self or ego be imagined to be a by-product of the behaviour of the naturally organised material body in response to its own needs and to its impact with the surroundings, then this consciousness must necessarily be momentary and it should be produced anew in every case of its behaviour. In that case the consciousness of the identity of the self throughout all kinds of behaviour and all changes of states of the body can in no way be accounted for. Not only is there the consciousness of the self-identity and the retention of the impressions of the past experiences and their reproduction in the present; but there is the knowledge, acquired through inference, generalisation, mathematical calculation, necessary implication, metaphysical speculation and other valid logical processes, of various general laws, abstract truths, future events, remote facts, etc., having no direct relation with the body and its experiences. How can such knowledge be explained, if the knowing subject be regarded as identified with or produced from the little changing physical body, having its behaviour and experience confined to every passing present moment?

Further, there is an undeniable consciousness of the freedom of will and action in all men, however restricted and resisted and frustrated it may actually be experienced to be. Even the dictum, "Eat, drink and be merry" would be meaningless without the recognition of this freedom. Now, freedom, however limited it may be, implies the capacity to exercise control over the functions of the body, to regulate the physical movements as well as the thoughts, emotions and desires with a view to the realisation of some preconceived future end. How can this freedom be explained, if there be no free conscious agent above this body and its functions and above the thoughts, emotions and desires? Then again, if the free conscious agent which controls and regulates the behaviours be not identical with the one that reaps the consequences, there can be no incentive to regulation of actions and no scheme of life. But the so-called bodily self is always changing. Hence the existence of an abiding conscious self above this changing body is presupposed by whatever scheme of life and ideal of pursuit may be adopted.

II. Self conceived as a flow of consciousness :—

A. Exposition :—

According to another line of thought, the self is conceived to be a phenomenal stream of consciousness without any noumenal conscious entity. This flow of consciousness, though related to the physical organism, is separate from it. But like the physical organism, it is always in the process of continuous transformation. Each unit of consciousness is momentary. Each unit is destroyed as soon as it is produced, and is immediately succeeded by the production of a fresh unit, which also is similarly destroyed at once and immediately

followed by a fresh one. In this way there is a continuous flow of momentary consciousnesses. Each succeeding unit of consciousness is causally related to the preceding one and consequently the impressions of the preceding unit appear in the nature and form of the succeeding unit. Hence this flow of consciousness is an unbroken series of momentary causes and effects. Perception, inference, ideation, remembrance, feelings, desires, etc. are forms of expression of this phenomenal consciousness. They are like particular kinds of ripples of this continuous stream.

The sense of an abiding self or ego arises in this unbroken series of momentary consciousnesses. Just as the water of a river appears as an extensive and durable mass, though in reality it is nothing but a flow in which every particle of water is separate from every other particle and no particle stays ever for two successive moments at the same place, and just as a flame appears as a lighted and heated body retaining its identity for a length of time, though it is really nothing but a continuous flow of momentary sparks of fire, so the self appears as a permanent conscious entity, though in reality it is nothing but a continuous flow of momentary consciousnesses. The experience of the abiding character of the self is therefore an illusory experience, and the idea of the existence of a permanent self behind the changing states and processes of consciousness, based on such experience, must also be illusory.*

* There is no logical strength in the argument that the connected series of the momentary phenomenal consciousnesses presupposes a permanent connecting agent, that the continuity of the phenomena involves the underlying presence of a noumenal unity, that the sense of identity implies a real identity. According to the law of causation or dependent origination, the effect originates from the cause destroyed. This causation does not require the operation of any agent present with the cause as well as with the effect. This is

B. CRITICISM.

This conception of the phenomenal self without any noumenal reality appears to be incapable of furnishing any adequate rational explanation for our actual experience. Knowledge is the most fundamental fact of our experience. Knowledge essentially involves a relation between subject and object. It therefore necessarily implies the presence of the knowing subject, the presence of the knowable object, some form of relation between them and the production of an idea in the subject corresponding to the nature of the object. If every unit of consciousness is separate from every other unit preceding and succeeding it, and if every such unit is destroyed as soon as it is produced, how is it possible for its coming into any kind of contact or

evident from the instances of causation observed in the objective world. When curd is produced from milk, milk ceases to be milk and curd comes into being, and in this case we find no unchanging entity underlying both milk and curd. The sprout shoots forth through the destruction of the seed, and no agent present with both is found to accomplish this causal connection. Even when several causes combine together to produce an effect, it is through the destruction of the separate existences of the combining causes that the effect is found to be produced. In such cases also, no agent present with all the causes and the effect is found necessary for combining the causes and producing the effect out of them. Thus, to account for the unbroken series of causally related momentary consciousnesses, no permanent unchanging agent need be supposed to exist. The consciousness of each moment is produced and destroyed and immediately followed by the appearance of its effect. There being no gap between the destruction of the causal consciousness and the production of the effect-consciousness, continuity is preserved. It does not involve any underlying unity. Like other ideas and feelings and desires, in which the phenomenal flow of consciousnesses manifests itself, the idea or feeling of self-identity also is one form of its manifestation. This is an illusory idea or feeling, and does not imply any real identity of the self throughout these changes.

relation with a similarly momentary object and forming any idea about it ? Even if it be supposed that just at the moment of the production of the momentary consciousness it comes in contact with a momentary object, then also before the impressions produced upon that consciousness by that object can be combined and interpreted into a complete idea about that object, both the consciousness and the object have vanished, giving birth to a new consciousness and a new object. It cannot be said that the impressions received by one unit are carried to the succeeding unit and so on, and thus the knowledge is produced in some moment of consciousness, though the impressions were received by some previous ones and combined some others and interpreted by some others still, in course of the flow. The very possibility of the acts of receiving impressions or combining them or interpreting them requires at least three moments of the existence of a unit of consciousness, viz., the moment of birth, the moment of action and the moment of destruction and passing on of the impressions to the next. The momentariness of the unit of consciousness can in no way explain any action on its part. Thus even sensations and perceptions which are the primary elements of knowledge cannot be logically explained in strict accordance with this conception. This being the case, it is needless to add that inference, which requires still greater and more sustained activity on the part of the knowing subject on the data previously acquired by itself, can have no chance of being explained consistently with the momentary character of consciousness. The only interpretation which knowledge, whether perceptual or inferential, can possibly bear in accordance with this theory is that it is a form of momentary appearance of the flow of consciousness, having no real relation with objects. Hence the nature of knowledge, as it is understood, must be regarded as

illusory. Whether the above interpretation also is tenable, we shall examine in the sequel.

This being the fate of knowledge according to this theory, the fate of remembrance must be still worse. Remembrance implies knowledge by the same subject, retention by it of the impressions of the objects as known in a subtle state, and awakenment and reproduction of those impressions on a future occasion. Remembrance can have no meaning, unless the knowing and remembering subject be identical. One cannot remember the experience of another. But according to the view under consideration, even if knowledge be regarded as possible to a particular unit of consciousness, the knowing subject being immediately destroyed with the knowledge, the question of remembrance cannot arise at all. A subject born at a future moment cannot be conceived as remembering the object experienced by a subject born and destroyed at some past moment. Here also it has to be said that what is experienced as remembrance is merely a form of appearance of consciousness at a particular moment or at a series of moments, without any objective validity.

Again, knowledge implies a distinction between true knowledge and false knowledge or error. This distinction can have no validity according to this view. In order to know that one's own previous knowledge about any object was false, true knowledge of the same object by the same subject must be attained, the past knowledge must be remembered and its being contradicted by the present must be experienced. But as neither the subject nor the object remains the same even for two consecutive moments, how can one knowledge arising at one moment in one subject about one object be regarded as true, and another

knowledge arising similarly at another moment in another subject about another object be regarded as false? Consciousness of truth and consciousness of error must accordingly be regarded as particular form of the expression of consciousness without any real significance.

Moreover, how can all these ordinary facts of everyday life be accounted for, if knowledge and remembrance have no real reference to any relation between subject and object, if there be no real identity of the knowing, remembering, desiring and acting subject, and no real identity of the known, remembered, desired and used object? If the so-called subject and the so-called objects are all momentary, how can there be any earnest desire for attaining an object on the ground of its having been previously known to be useful and enjoyable and how can the expectation be fulfilled?

If all these be regarded as illusory, the very idea of illusoriness would imply the validity of some knowledge and remembrance, for illusoriness is meaningless without reference to truth known and remembered. But if my knowledge and remembrance about any reality have to be accepted as true, the momentariness of the self or consciousness cannot be consistently maintained. Moreover, how consistently with their theory do the advocates of this doctrine come forward to maintain their own position and to refute the position of others by means of rational argumentation? The self to which the data are present die long before the conclusion is reached, and the self that draws the conclusion has no data from which the conclusion is drawn. Nay, the self that puts the subject of a proposition dies before any predicate is affirmed or denied of it, and the self that brings forward the predicate finds no subject of which to affirm or deny it. How can a series of

momentary conscious units become a philosopher and carry on a logical fight against others?

Let us now pass over the question of the validity of knowledge and remembrance. How can the advocates of this view explain the idea of personal identity, the presence of which is of course undeniable as a psychological fact? Does this idea belong to the entire stream of consciousness or to the particular momentary conscious units? If the entire stream of consciousness be regarded as forming this idea of personal identity (on whatever ground it may be led to do so), this stream must be conceived as having an existence of its own, distinguished from, though immanent in and underlying, the existences of the momentary units, and must therefore be regarded as having an identity of existence from the very beginning of the course of the stream. That is to say, the stream of consciousness must in that case be conceived as a self-conscious self-identical permanent entity, and this entity must be regarded either as modifying itself into, though retaining its identity in, the unbroken series of momentary consciousnesses, or as existing in its changeless character as the substratum upon which the unbroken temporal series of momentary consciousnesses appears and moves on. If what is described by the exponents of this view as a stream or series or aggregate of successive momentary units of consciousness be not a real identical self-conscious and self-distinguishing entity present from the beginning in or along with each of the units, there could not have been the consciousness or idea of personal identity at each moment of the phenomenal flow of consciousness. But this conception of consciousness being unacceptable to them, they must reject the view that the entire stream of consciousness holds the idea of personal identity.

Hence it is to be supposed that each successive momentary conscious unit forms this idea of personal identity or that this idea is inherent in each of the units. Here again difficulties arise. If the idea of personal identity constitutes the inherent character of each conscious unit, there would be no possibility of emancipation from it. Even if much importance be not attached to this objection, it must be admitted that the idea of personal identity of one conscious unit is distinct from and independent of that of every other unit. In that case the continuity of the consciousness of personal identity should have no psychological basis, because no relation among the ideas of the distinct units can be known to any unit,—no particular conscious unit can possibly know the characters, ideas or experiences of the past or the future conscious units,—and hence any plan of life would be impossible.

The only other view that can be resorted to by the advocates of this theory is that in course of the flow of consciousness each particular conscious unit acquires knowledge of its relation to the preceding and the succeeding units and forms the idea of a phenomenal identity. But this view also is psychologically untenable. In order to know this relation, each unit must have knowledge of the preceding and the succeeding units. But the possibility of such knowledge demands the presence of the knowing unit and the known units at the same time. The fundamental assumption of the theory, however, is that every unit is destroyed as soon as it is produced. Thus when the knowing unit is present, even the immediately preceding and the immediately succeeding units are non-existent. Hence no relation between itself and the preceding or the succeeding unit can possibly be perceived by it. There being no perceived data, it cannot even infer that it was preceded

by any conscious unit or that it will be succeeded by any. Its consciousness, if any, must be confined to itself. Accordingly, no momentary unit of consciousness can possibly form any idea of continued personal identity, nor can it even acquire any knowledge of the flow or series of consciousnesses. Thus, neither the sense of personal identity, which is universally experienced, nor the knowledge of the unbroken series of momentary consciousnesses, which is affirmed by this theory, can be consistently explained in accordance with this conception of the self. Not only this; such a momentary conscious unit cannot even be conscious of itself as momentarily existent, because it cannot possibly be the knower of its birth and death. It cannot form any idea of time and space, it cannot know the existence of time before its production and after its destruction; it can have no time to look before and after and to look inward and outward. Hence it cannot distinguish itself from anything in time or space. Consequently, it cannot be conceived as having any consciousness of itself as occupying any position in time or space, as possessing any characteristic, as being produced and destroyed, as having any particular form of existence for a moment. That is to say, such a conscious unit would be really unconscious. Who would then be there to formulate and propagate such views ?

The analogy of the flame, the current and the like is futile. The momentary individual sparks of fire or particles of water have no knowledge or idea, either of themselves as momentary and causally related to one another or of their aggregate as constituting an unbroken series or a continuous flow and as having an apparent identity. The apparent identity of the flame or the mass of water in the river is experienced by the observer, who remains the same identical person throughout the course of the observation of

the rapidly changing units of fire or water. It is due to the identity of the observer, the imperfection of his power of observation, and the unifying operation of his self that the rapidly changing units appear as one continuous and identical whole. But in the case of the flow of the momentary consciousnesses, no self-identical observer or knower is recognised, and hence it bears no analogy with the instances cited.

Further, the stream of consciousness cannot be characterised either as different or as non-different from the momentary units. If it be non-different from them, then the units alone should be regarded as truly existent and the flow should be meaningless. If it be different from them, then the flow as such, whatever its character may be, must be regarded as having an existence of its own, distinct from that of the individual units, and it must be considered either as transcending or as pervading each of the units. In either case, it should be conceived as a relatively permanent entity, and this is inconsistent with the doctrine of momentariness. Similarly, no relation between the units also can be logically ascertained.

Moreover, practical efficiency is regarded by these schools as the criterion of existence. If a unit is supposed to be destroyed immediately with its production, it cannot possibly have any practical efficiency and cannot therefore be regarded as having any real existence. Apart from this, the analysis of the conception of momentariness leads to the impossible idea that it is existent and non-existent exactly at the same moment. In order to exist,–not to speak of serving any practical purpose–it must be related at least to three moments of time, viz. the moment of birth, the moment of existence and the moment of death. If the moment of existence does not intervene between the

moments of production and destruction, production and destruction, becoming existent and becoming non-existent, should be identical.

It is sometimes said that consciousness is always in a state of *becoming*. The units are only *moments* in this process of becoming. They by themselves cannot be described as either existent or non-existent. In a continuous stream the moments are no more existent than non-existent. Only as *moments* of the stream they have existence; but as individual units they have no separate existence. Their *being* is merged in *becoming*. Hence they are described as being produced and destroyed at the same time. Now, this interpretation also cannot be logically maintained. The process of *becoming* without any *entity* that *becomes* is inconceivable. *Becoming* must be predicated of some *reality*. If any real entity is in a continuous state of becoming, it must be conceived as a self-modifying substance, which retains its identity in the midst of the changes it undergoes. If this be the conception of the self, it is virtually conceived as a permanent entity, which is essentially the same throughout all phenomenal states and processes of consciousness. Whether such a conception can be logically maintained, we shall have occasion to examine in the sequel. But it is not certainly consistent with the view we are examining now, because this view categorically denies the existence of any permanent self.

III. Self conceived as a permanent conscious entity pervading the body :—

A. Exposition.

According to some religio-philosophical schools, the self is neither identical with the living body nor a flow of consciousness within or without the body, but a permanent

conscious entity occupying the whole of the body. It is the presence of the self, which distinguishes a living being from an inanimate object, a conscious being from an unconscious being. The self, which makes a body living and conscious, which endows it with the power of feeling, knowledge and action, must be regarded as essentially distinct from the body itself. To account for the consciousness of personal identity, the validity of remembrance, the adaptation of knowledge with action, the possibility of reaping the fruits of actions, the possibility of ascent to higher and higher planes and attainment of liberation, and in fact all phenomena of experience, it is necessary to admit that this self is a permanent entity. This self is not merely an object of inference,—not merely a presupposition of all cognitive, emotional and practical experiences,—not merely admissible as a necessary condition of morality and religion ; but it is directly perceived through introspection,—it is essentially self-conscious. The self must be admitted to be a permanent conscious entity which retains its identity throughout all the bodily and mental changes and all the changing experiences.

Since the living body is not partly living and partly non-living, since sensations are received apparently by every part of the living body, and since it is the self which really gives life to and receives sensations in all the diverse parts of the body from the tip of the hair to the nail of the foot, the self must be conceived as occupying the entire body. On the other hand, since no cause of sensation not affecting the body is perceived by the self and no object beyond the body is enlivened by it, the self cannot be regarded as existing beyond the limits of the body. Hence the self must be conceived as occupying the whole of, but not extending beyond, the body in which it dwells. This

implies that the self occupies space and is of the size of the body it lives in. It is therefore neither atomic nor all-pervasive nor supra-spatial. It is a permanent space-occupying conscious entity, assuming the size of the body in which it resides and through which it manifests itself during its mundane existence. Just as there are innumerable living bodies, so there are countless selves in the universe. But unlike the bodies, the selves are eternal.

Now, the innumerable bodies in which the selves reside are of diverse shapes and sizes and of diverse orders of complexity and heterogeneity, and each living body also is subject to changes in shape, size, complexity and heterogeneity. Since each individual self occupies all the parts of the body it lives in, the selves must be regarded as capable of assuming diverse shapes and sizes and of passing through diverse stages of development. Accordingly the different classes of living beings indicate different stages of the development of the selves. When the body of a child grows older and older, the self also must be regarded as growing along with it. The self of an elephant must be regarded as far bigger than the self of an ant. And so on. As the selves are essentially distinct from the physical organisms (including the sense-organs, external as well as internal), they cannot be regarded as being produced and destroyed with these organisms. They continue to exist after the dissolution of the bodies, and may enter into newer and newer bodies. The size of a self of course varies with the size of the body it enters into, in order that it may pervade and enliven the whole of it.

B. Criticism :--

It may be conceded that a system of religious discipline can be founded in accordance with this conception of the self and that such discipline can contribute greatly to

the satisfaction of the actually experienced moral and spiritual demands of the human nature. But can this conception be consistently maintained and can it be rationally established ?

What is meant by saying that the self is of the size of the body, in which it resides ? If it merely means that every part of the body is made living and conscious by the presence of the self in it, this is no ground for holding that the self as a substance must occupy every portion of it. Just as a flame burning at a particular corner of a room can illumine the entire room with its light, so the self dwelling at a particular part of the body may make all the parts of the body living and conscious by its unique power. In that case it may be of an atomic size or of any other size than that of the body. Or it may not have any spatial property at all, but may still exercise its illumining influence upon all parts of the body.

If it be held that the self itself occupies all the parts of the body, the nature of this occupation has to be rationally ascertained. Either the self is to be conceived as having numerous parts, so that the different parts of the self may be associated with the different parts of the body, or it is to be conceived as pervading all the parts of the body without itself being possessed of any parts. If the former alternative be accepted, various difficulties arise. The self is then to be regarded as an aggregate of parts, and whatever is of the nature of an aggregate of parts must be regarded as produced by the conjunction of parts and destructible by the disjunction of parts. Such a compound substance can never be eternal. Further, wherever there is a combination of parts, there must be some principle or power or substance to link together these parts, and in the absence of such a unifying agency the unification of many

is not possible. This implies that some principle or power or substance about the self must be recognised for the sake of the validity of this conception of the composite self. Moreover, if different parts of the self are associated with different parts of the body, when any part of the body is destroyed or mutilated, the corresponding part of the self also is to be regarded as destroyed or mutilated. But the question which is of the greatest importance is, how can knowledge, feeling and will be explained consistently in terms of such a self? Is consciousness the property of the aggregate self or of the particular parts of the self? If the particular parts of the self occupying the particular parts of the body be endowed with the power of knowing, the knowledge of each part must be distinct from that of each other part. The part associated with the eyes may perceive colour, but not sound, taste, smell etc. The part occupying the tongue may perceive taste, but not other objects. And so on with the other parts. Now, how in this way can the knowledge of an object be produced? How can it be known that it is the same object which possesses the colour, the taste, the smell, etc. perceived by the different senses? The validity of the knowledge of a concrete object demands that there should be one knowing or perceiving subject that can know or perceive the perception of all these senses and the parts of the self related to them and can know or perceive the distinct qualities perceived by the distinct senses as pertaining to the same object. This means that there must be one knower behind the partial knowers, one perceiver behind the partial perceivers. This knower or perceiver must be a partless self, to which all the parts spoken of and their experiences must be objects. If this be admitted, then that partless self must be the true self, and the recognition of the self with parts is

useless. The partless self cannot of course be regarded as of the size of the body.

Similarly, if different parts of the self have different experiences, how can remembrance be explained ? Moreover, how can the hand make use of an object, which the eyes see, or the mouth respond to a sound which the ears hear ? All such problems remain insoluble according to this assumption.

If, on the other hand, consciousness be the property of the entire self and not of the parts, then the entire self must be conceived as present in every part, receiving sensations, knowing objects, handling things, etc. In that case, why should the self be regarded as consisting of parts ? The conscious self without any parts is then to be regarded as present in or related to every part of the body. This is more consistent than the conception of the self as consisting of parts and at the same time wholly present in every part, not only because it is in harmony with the Law of Parsimony, but also because an aggregate of parts cannot rationally be conceived as the conscious subject by itself. Moreover, if the whole lies in every part, wherein lies the difference between the whole and the parts ?

Now, if the self be conceived as pervading all the parts of the body without itself being possessed of parts, what can this pervasion mean ? It cannot of course mean spatial extension over the whole of the body, because such extension necessarily involves the notion of parts. The different parts of the body are somehow related to, controlled and organised by, made living and conscious through the influence of, the self, which itself is one conscious entity without any parts. If the self be such a non-extensive permanent substance, it is meaningless

to say that it occupies innumerable space-points or that it is of the size of the body.

It may be argued that the self is regarded as of the size of the body, because its presence is confined to the body,—because its enlivening, illumining and controlling power is felt only in all the parts of the body and not outside it. But is the argument valid? If the self were wholly limited within the physical body, how could knowledge of the past and future and remote objects and events be possible? Certainly the body is not related to them. If the self also were absolutely unrelated to them, it would not have been able to illumine them and make them the objects of knowledge. The self is admittedly the illuminer of all objects of knowledge. If it be said that the self being seated within the body sheds its lustre upon all those objects, then it may also be said that being seated in a particular point of the body or without being seated anywhere within the body, it enlivens and illumines all the parts of the body by virtue of its inherent power of doing so. That is to say, it may be either atomic or all-pervading or it may have no measure at all and may not occupy any point of space.

Moreover, it is believed that the self exists even after the death of the physical body and passes from one body to another. Now, what should be the magnitude of the self, when it is in the disembodied state? There is no ground for holding that it must be of the magnitude of the body it has left, till it enters into another body. Its connection with the former body being cut off, its limitation due to that connection ought to be transcended and it ought therefore to be all-pervading or devoid of magnitude; again, when it enters into another body, it should become subject to limitation or acquire magnitude. This obviously

does not stand to reason. Again, when the self of a minute imperceptible living cell develops into the self of a full-grown big body, if the self is to be regarded as increasing in size, this would be possible only through the accretion of newer and newer parts. If these parts are conscious self-luminous particles, then each of them would be a self and the entire body would be occupied by a large number of selves. If these parts are unconscious or non-self-luminous, the entire self must be regarded as an aggregate of unconscious particles; how can such a self be itself self-conscious? If it be said that the self remains in the contracted form in the cell and manifests itself in the expanded form in the whole body, then also there would be difficulty in forming a rational conception of such contraction and expansion. There can be contraction when numerous parts of a substance remain close together, and expansion when they remain separate from one another, leaving empty space between them. At any rate, unless a substance is composed of parts, contraction and expansion become unintelligible. If the self be regarded as an aggregate of parts, it must be non-eternal and all the other objections mentioned before would remain unanswerable.

The only sense in which contraction and expansion can be understood with reference to a unitary partless conscious self is the contraction and expansion of the attributes of knowledge, power, happiness, etc. But this can have nothing to do with the size or spatial magnitude of the self. Thus the conception of self under review can in no way be rationally accepted, though in accordance with this conception also a man may advance in the path of morality and religion.

IV. The conception of Self as a spiritual monad :—

A. Exposition :—

There are several religio-philosophical schools, which, though differing from one another with regard to various questions of theoretical and practical importance, agree in holding the innumerable finite selves as partless spiritual monads with the attributes of knowledge, emotion and will. They find that the self cannot consistently be regarded as identical with the psycho-physical organism, or as distinct from, but of the size of, the body in which it dwells for the time being, or as merely a continuous stream of momentary consciousnesses without any identity of substance. They are convinced that the consciousness of the identity of a living being from birth to death, inspite of all the radical changes of the bodily organism and the powers of the senses and the mind, and constant changes of the sensuous and mental experiences, states and processes, necessarily implies the existence of an essentially changeless permanent conscious substance, and that the consciousness of 'I', though not unoften confusedly referring to the gross physical body or the psychical flow, always ultimately refers to this permanent substance existing behind these bodily and mental changes. The possibility of valid knowledge and remembrance, adjustment beween knowledge and action, systematic pursuit of an end or ideal, regulation of the bodily and the mental behaviours for getting rid of ignorance and error, sorrow and bondage, vice and ugliness and for attaining truth, bliss, freedom, holiness and beauty, etc, leads necessarily to the same conclusion, because all these would be inexplicable in the absence of such a permanent self distinct from the body and the mind.

Each individual must be regarded as having a distinct self of its own, and each self must be conceived as experiencing the states and functions of the particular body and mind, with which it is related,—the actual knowledge, emotion and action of each self must be conceived as conditioned by the modifications of the body and the minds which it owns as belonging to itself. If, on the contrary, there had been only one self related to all individual minds and living bodies, or if there had been innumerable selves, each of which is all-pervading and therefore related to all bodies and minds, then that one self or each of these innumerable selves must be regarded as being the subject of all the diverse and conflicting experiences of the universe. In that case the same self must be thought of as at the same time experiencing birth and death, happiness and misery, lordiness and slavery, health and disease, childhood, youth and oldage, walking, sleeping and dreaming, worldliness and super-worldliness, bondage and liberation, etc. This would mean that either the self would have at the same time mutually contradictory cognitions, emotions and volitions, or that these should counteract one another and the self would have no experience at all. Neither of these alternatives can be accepted. The former would violate the law of contradiction. The latter would render the recognition of such a self useless and unnecessary, because it would be of no help in furnishing any rational explanation for the consciousness of personal identity or for the systematic organisation and regulation of the cognitive, emotional, volitional, moral and spiritual life in particular individuals. The non-recognition of any permanent self-luminous self also would render their explanation impossible. For these reasons, the existence of one permanent self in the case of each individual must be admitted.

Now, though the individual self is definitely related to a particular body, which it accepts as its own, and knows and feels and does everything through the medium of this body, and though every part of the body is made living and sensitive by its presence in it, the self cannot rationally be regarded as of the size of the body. The inadequacies and inconsistencies of such a conception have already been discussed. The permanent self must be partless and simple. Since it can neither be all-pervading nor of the size of the body, it must be conceived as atomic. Whatever extends over more than one unit of space must be divisible into parts, and whatever is so divisible is destroyed through dissolution into those parts. Such a substance cannot retain its identity in the midst of all kinds of changes and cannot therefore be permanent and eternal. The self must accordingly be conceived either as occupying one unit of space like a material atom or as occupying no space at all. Since the self is apprehended within the body and not outside it, and since it cannot consistently be regarded as extended over the different parts of the body, it is more reasonable to describe it as a conscious spiritual monad of atomic size. (The self is located in the brain or in the pineal gland or in the heart or in the naval-lotus from which point all its activities flow as illustrated by the examples of monarch, light, scent etc.)

Absolute knowledge, absolute love, absolute will and absolute bliss really constitute the essential nature of the self. But in the mundane course of existence they are veiled, and the self is under the law of *karma*. It then identifies itself with one or more of the instruments of its worldly manifestation. On account of such ignorance of its true nature and identification with what it is not, its knowledge, love, will-power and happiness become limited

and obstructed, it suffers from error, hatred, fear, desire, disappointment, misery, etc., it passes through various stages of bondage and limitation, it takes birth after birth, it goes to heaven and falls into hell, and so on. Through systematic moral and spiritual discipline, the mind has to be raised to higher and higher planes, the veil has to be removed, and thereby the self has to establish itself in its true essential nature, in which it enjoys the unobstructed conscious relationship with the Infinite Eternal Perfect Omnipotent Omniscient Blissful Reality. It is by the will of God that the finite selves are self-forgetful and worldly, and it is by the grace of God that they are led to resort to systematic courses of spiritual discipline and to realise the perfection latent in them.*

* With regard to the original relation between God and the countless individual selves, diverse opinions are held by these classes of thinkers According to some, God originally created them by the exercise of the infinite power of His will He created the infinite number of finite selves as well as the infinite diversities of the objective world But the selves He created 'after His own image', so that through the courses of their experiences in this objective world they might progressively approach towards the realisation of the divine character latent in them This creation is conceived sometimes as phenomenon in time and sometimes as eternal According to others, the selves are not created by God, but are eternally co-existent with God. They have however, no existence apart from and independent of the existence of God,—Who is the Absolute Reality. The relation between God and the selves may be conceived on the analogy of the relation between the sun and its rays or between fire and its sparks They thus participate in the nature of God, but are still eternally different (not separable) from Him They exist in for and by God, but are not substantially identical with God According to others again, they are the eternal finite self-manifestations of God, and as such are different as well as non-different from Him. Substantially they are non-different but as finite manifestations they are also different from the Absolute Self-conscious Personality In the mundane state the aspect of difference is emphasised, and they appear to be

B. Criticism :—

The conception of self, explained above, with minor modifications, has been influencing the religious life of

independent entities subject to the laws of the world But in the state of liberation also, the difference does not altogether vanish, but they being conscious of their pure character as self-manifestations of God, the aspect of non-difference is emphasised.

In the opinion of another school of thinkers, God eternally manifests Himself through His two Powers, one intelligent and another non-intelligent The world of material and mental diversities is the expression of His non-intelligent self-veiling Power, while the plurality of finite selves are the expressions of His intelligent self-revealing Power. Power being logically different as well as non-different from Substance in which it inheres, and the expressions of Power also being similarly different as well as non-different from Power, the selves are to be conceived as different as well as non-different from God These finite and individualistic expressions of His intelligent Power, as long as they are in contact with and under the influence of the expressions of His non-intelligent self-veiling Power, have their intelligence limited and distorted; but they have the capacity to get rid of these limitations and distortions. In the state of liberation they become perfectly intelligent and participate in and enjoy the essential transcendent character of God

According to still another view, the finite selves are merely finite centres of experience of God Himself Through these finite centres God views Himself in diverse partial aspects God, according to this theory, eternally realises and enjoys Himself from the stand-point of His entire perfect existence and nature as well as from innumerable finite stand-points Each centre of finite experience is an individual self These finite centres remain as such even at the state of liberation and perfection But in the states of bondage and imperfection the finite experiences are viewed as unconnected with the whole, but in the state of liberation each self realises its relations to the whole and enjoys all its experiences as spiritual i e as blissful expressions of the Absolute Spirit, of Whom it is itself a particular centre of experience In this way, various conceptions have been formed by diverse orders of religio-philosophical thinkers with regard to the relation between the selves or the spiritual monads and God or the Absolute Spirit

various sects for hundreds of years. The followers of each sect assert that their conception alone is perfect, while the conceptions of all other sects are faulty. Most people accept and cherish the doctrines, prevalent in the particular sect they belong to, in unquestioning faith, without in many cases making any serious attempt to penetrate into their real significance and to estimate their logical and spiritual values. They condemn the views of all other rival sects also without any sincere endeavour to understand them and to examine the strength and weakness of the arguments in their favour. The thoughtful and rationalistic members of each sect also begin and continue their philosophical studies with a sectarian bias. They study the other views with the definite purpose of finding fault with them, and reflect upon the doctrines of their own sect with the definite idea of their infallibility and with a view to strengthen them, if possible, with further arguments. They remain blind, sometimes sincerely and sometimes wilfully, to the defects of the views cherished by their own community and propounded by the particular treatises which they recognise as scriptures. This attitude may be helpful to the religious self-discipline of the devotees, but cannot be encouraged and admired in the domain of rational inquiry.

Let us briefly examine the validity of the conception of self held by these religious sects. First of all, they assume the existence of a permanent self and regard this assumption as indispensably necessary for explaining the consciousness of individual identity in the midst of changes and also the validity of our internal and external experiences. But is it a sufficient ground for proving the real existence of such a self? Do we anywhere perceive such a permanent changeless substance? We recognise

identity in difference everywhere within the range of our experience. But do we anywhere find a changeless substance as separate from, as the substratum of and as the knower and regulator of the changes or modifications actually observed in it? Neither within ourselves nor outside do we perceive any substance apart from phenomena, any identity without difference, any noumenal reality behind changing objects and processes. On what authority, then, can we infer the real existence of a noumenal self as separate from, as transcendent above and as the permanent knower and regulator of the phenomenal experiences?

It is argued that the supposition of such a noumenal reality behind the phenomena of experience is a fundamental demand of the law of thought, that our reason cannot rest satisfied without recognising a changeless permanent substance as the ground and support of changing transitory phenomena. The existence of the self is thus proved on the strength of the necessary implication (*arthápatti*) of our experience. But is it a convincing argument? What is called here a fundamental demand of the law of thought is really a subjective demand, and a subjective demand of our undeveloped rational faculty cannot be accepted as a sufficient guarantee for the objective or real existence of any independent entity. Moreover, what we ordinarily regard as the fundamental laws of thought are not absolutely fundamental. The deep-rooted assumptions prevailing in the thought of a race for many generations are not unoften looked upon as fundamental laws. With the ascent of thought to higher and higher planes, the so-called fundamental laws of the lower planes of thought are also found to be modified. Further, necessary implication can be accepted as valid evidence, only when the exclusive relationship between two kinds of objects is firmly established from

previous experience (such as, between taking food and becoming fat and between not taking food and not becoming fat), and one such object is actually observed at present. But the exclusive relationship between the noumenal self and the phenomenal life and consciousness or between a changeless noumenal reality and changing phenomena is nowhere established in actual experience. Therefore, implication as a means of proof is not applicable in this case. In all ages there have been positivist thinkers who do not admit the logical necessity of assuming the existence of any noumenal reality behind the phenomenal realities of internal and external experience. The phenomena are regarded by them real by themselves. To dislodge them from this position, definite convincing proof of the existence of the noumenal self is demanded; but this is found wanting.

Secondly, even admitting that a system of phenomena necessarily implies a noumenal reality behind them, that the changing attributes imply a permanent substance as their support, we are required to ascertain what the nature of such a reality or substance is. Is the nature of the substance to be conceived as essentially consisting in the system of attributes or phenomena in which it manifests itself or as something distinct from and transcendent above those attributes or phenomena? If the former alternative be accepted, then the changes of attributes or phenomena must mean changes of the nature of the substance. That is to say, older substances would be destroyed and newer substances would be produced every moment. Thus the substance also would be reduced to the form of a changing phenomena and would imply another substance behind it and so on *ad infinitum*. From this point of view, the recognition of a noumenal self for the purpose of explaining

the continuity and systematisation of the phenomena of consciousness and bodily life would be useless, since the noumenon itself would be no better than a phenomenon. If, on the other hand, the noumenon has any existence and nature distinct from and unaffected by the phenomena or attributes, then what would be the relation between the noumenon and these phenomena or attributes and how can the connection between them be accounted for ? No logical relation between them can be ascertained. Moreover, the phenomena or attributes should in that case be regarded as having separate existences from the noumenon or substance. Knowledge, feeling and will should accordingly be regarded as having existences apart from the existence of the self and as superimposed upon it. If such separate existence of them be possible, then the recognition of the noumenal self would be superfluous. Further, the self should from this point of view be an attributeless, functionless, relationless entity, and there would be no ground for supposing the existence of such an entity.

Thirdly, let us concede that some noumenal reality must necessarily exist as the source, support and regulator of the phenomena and attributes. The exponents of the view under consideration recognise the existence of One Noumenal Supreme Self or God as the Source, Support and Regulator of the entire universe of physical and mental phenomena,—of all orders of phenomenal existences, inorganic, organic, sentient and rational. All individual living beings owe their existence to Him, their individuality in the midst of the diverse changes of psychical and physical circumstances is retained by Him, their mental and bodily activities and affections are regulated and systematised by Him, their relations with one another are controlled by Him. He is regarded as immanent in every

individual being as well as transcendent above all. Along with this Supreme Noumenal Reality, the advocates of this view also assert the existence of countless individual noumenal selves for the sake of the rational explanation of the phenomena relating to individual living organisms. Is it not a superfluous and gratuitous hypothesis? The supposition of one omnipotent omniscient all-sustaining all-regulating universal Self being sufficient to account for the consciousness of ego and its continuity and identity in each individual as well as to furnish explanations for the organised and systematic operations of each psycho-physical organism, what is the rational necessity for supposing a plurality of finite individual noumenal selves?

Further, the individual selves also are conceived as essentially pure; absolute knowledge, feeling, will and action are supposed to be their inherent attributes; the imperfections in all these respects are regarded as due to their false self-identifications with the psycho-physical organisms, and these false identifications are regarded as due to ignorance about their true inherent characters. Thus the egoism and sense of individuality of each individual is regarded as phenomenal. This being the case, we may reasonably put the One Supreme Self in the place of the plurality of individual selves in order to adequately account for those phenomena. If the pure noumenal individual selves can be regarded as becoming ignorant of their essential character and identifying themselves falsely with the phenomenal psycho-physical organisms, owing ultimately to the creative or self-manifesting will or nature of God, there is no inconsistency in holding that God Himself is the common Self of all these organisms, that He manifests Himself in a plurality of phenomenal living beings, that His creative nature

makes Him put a veil upon His omnipotent omniscient all-pervading blissful character in relation to these individual phenomenal beings, identify Himself with them and progressively realise and enjoy Himself in and through them in this world-process. This latter supposition is more reasonable, because it is in harmony with the law of Parsimony.

Moreover, if the individual selves are noumenal realities, it is difficult to understand how there can be any real relation between them and God, how they can be governed by God, how their existence can be regarded as derived from, sustained by, dependent upon and subordinate to the existence of God ? A noumenon, as its conception implies, ought to be existent by itself and for itself. Whatever has a derivative, dependent and subordinate existence and whatever has its nature modified in course of time ought to be regarded as a phenomenal being. Accordingly, the individual selves, related to the bodies, ought more reasonably to be conceived as having only phenomenal existence, and the Universal Self alone should be regarded as the noumenal Self of all things.

It is to be noted that we are not here concerned with the validity of this conception of God and His relation to the selves and the world. This question has been dealt with elsewhere.

In the fourth place, even admitting the existence of a distinct noumenal self in each individual living being, do we find any convincing ground for holding that the self is of the atomic size ? In order to consider this point, we are first to examine the conception of an atom. What is the

source of our knowledge of an atom? Do we find any atom or any substance of atomic size in our experience? By an atom we understand an indivisible particle of matter, occupying a unit of space. In the scientific circle the existence of such atoms is a matter of hypothesis, adopted for the suitable description of material objects occupying space. All bodies occupying space are found to be divisible into parts occupying smaller space. This process of division is supposed to have a limit. Ultimately every such divisible substance is supposed to be reducible into indivisible particles, which are called atoms. The process of division cannot be actually continued upto the limiting point, and therefore atoms cannot be actually perceived. Since in no field of our experience do we perceive atoms, we can nowhere observe any concomitance between atoms and bodies occupying space, and therefore there is no adequate logical ground for the legitimate inference of the existence of such atoms. We observe bodies in space; but we never observe any ultimate indivisible point of space or any substance occupying such a point of space. It is therefore not unreasonably supposed by many philosophers that every material body is infinitely divisible, there being no actual finality in the process of division, and space also, if divisible at all, must be infinitely divisible. According to some schools of thought, space is one indivisible whole,—it cannot be divided into parts. According to others again, space has got no objective existence, but it is merely "a form of intuition" or a particular form in which sensations are received and material objects in their relation of co-existence are conceived. There being such divergences of opinions with regard to the nature of space itself, a point of space and a substance occupying such a point are only objects of imagination or abstract thought. From the

stand-point of normal experience, the objects occupying space or received in the form of spatial relations may be accepted as really existing; but a point of space and an indivisible particle of substance, called an atom, occupying such a point of space are mere abstractions, like geometrical points and lines. Such abstractions may be useful for scientific description of real objects, their relations and changes; but they themselves cannot be ascertained to be real entities.

Now, if this conception of an atom be applied to the self, this atomic self would not be a really existent entity, but a mere abstraction or an imaginary entity. By implication it might also be construed to mean that the self is an object of experience occupying limited or unlimited space or received in the form of spatial relations, and that it is capable of being divided into indivisible particles or atomic selves, of which the real self is composed. This would of course be inadmissible to the advocates of the doctrine of atomic selves. Hence there is no adequate ground for inferring the real existence of atomic selves.

Even if the material atoms are admitted to be real entities, is there any justification for the inference of real spiritual atoms? The self is regarded as fundamentally of a different nature from the material substances. Material bodies are objects of experience, perceived as occupying space and changing in time. The spiritual substance, viz. the self, is conceived as the experiencer of space and time and the material substances and phenomena in space and time. Can we ascertain the nature of the experiencer—the knower, feeler and willer—on the analogy of the nature of the objects of knowledge, feeling and will? If we draw the analogy in point of size or magnitude, there is no reason why we should not draw analogy in other respects.

as well and thereby reduce the experiencer into a veritable object of experience. In that case, another self has to be inferred to account for the experience of this self, and so on *ad infinitum.* In truth, if an experiencer, distinct from the objects of experience, is at all to be recognised for the sake of the explanation of the systematic experiences, the experiencer of space and time cannot itself be an object in space and time; it cannot be regarded as occupying any portion of space or time; it cannot therefore be conceived either as existing in any particular point of space and time or as extending over numerous points of space and time. It must be regarded as transcending space and time, while making space and time as well as the spatial and temporal realities the objects of its knowledge. Whether this position also can be logically established is a question, the discussion of which is not relevant for the examination of the logical validity of the conception of atomic self.

It is argued that since the noumenal self is eternal or indestructible, it must be a partless non-composite entity, and a partless entity must be either all-pervading or atomic; and as the individual self cannot consistently be regarded as all-pervading, it must be regarded as atomic. But this argument also is not quite convincing. The conception of an entity as all-pervading as well as its conception as atomic implies reference to space, and whatever has reference to space is a material object. If the self is a non-material spiritual entity, it ought not to be described in terms of space. It may be neither atomic nor all-pervading nor of limited size, but it may exist above and unrelated to space.

Further, the arguments by which the exponents of this theory refute the all-pervading nature of the self are not conclusive, and some of them may be turned against

their view as well. It is said that the existence of a plurality of all-pervading selves is inconceivable. This objection would have been strong indeed, if the law of impenetrability were applicable to the selves. But this law is applicable only to material entities occupying space. There is no inconsistency in the conception of a plurality of infinite eternal spiritual entities. Ether, space, time are also each an infinite entity, and they do not limit each other. It is also said that if every individual self had been infinite or all-pervading, every self would have been related to every living body, and therefore every individual would participate in the experiences of all and so on. But if mere all-pervadingness implies the actual phenomenal relation of a self to all objects, living and non-living, in space, then the inherent unlimited pure consciousness of the atomic self also, as maintained by these schools, ought to relate it to all objects in the universe. If in the latter case the difficulty can be solved by asserting that the actual phenomenal knowledge, etc. of every individual is conditional upon the grades of development and the particular forms of modification of the individual mind, the difficulty in the former case also can be sought to be solved in the same way. The actual experiences of individuals are mental phenomena, and as an individual mind is not regarded as all-pervading or related to all bodies, the experiences of one cannot be expected to be shared by others.

Moreover, if all-pervasiveness implies relatedness to all objects and phenomena in the entire space, dwelling in one point of space ought to imply relatedness only to the object or phenomenon in that point of space. How then can the atomic self be regarded as related to the entire living body? As the point of space in which the atomic self dwells cannot contain any other object, the self ought not from this

point of view be related to anything at all. Thus the arguments for preferring atomic nature to all-pervading nature are not logically strong enough to persuade one to adopt this view.

The relation of the atomic self to the various parts of the extended body is sought to be described on the analogy of some examples. It is to be remarked that unless the atomic nature of the self and its relation to the whole body are established logically on independent rational grounds, such examples are useless. They can only illustrate the relation, but cannot prove it. But no satisfactory logical proof has been obtained. The examples cited are also not quite relevant. The king in the palace, the lamp at the corner of a room, the star in the sky, the flower at a distance, etc., are not atomic substances. The example of an atomic substance radiating its influence over a wide area is nowhere observed. The king has direct relation with his ministers, his military officers, his civil administrators, and others within the palace itself. They are all human beings like the king. Interaction among them can easily occur. The king can form direct relation with many other men also by moving from place to place. Thus he can transmit his authority to various parts of his kingdom. The king, the people through whom he rules, and the people whom he rules are all embodied living beings, and the relation among them is quite intelligible. But the self is a noumenal spiritual partless atomic substance, and the body is a phenomenal material extended substance divided into various parts. They have absolute different natures. How can the relation between them be understood on the analogy of the relation between a king and his subjects? It may be said that the self becomes related to the different parts of the body through the instrumentality

of the mind. But the mind also is a phenomenal reality and of a fundamentally different character from the self. How can the relation between the noumenal self and the phenomenal mind be established?

The example of the lamp also is not convincing. The lamp illumines the room by emitting rays, which are particles of the lamp itself and which come in contact with the different parts of the room. But the atomic self, as conceived, cannot emit any parts of itself. Similar is the case with the light-particles of the sun and the stars, the scent-particles of the flowers, etc. Knowledge, feeling, will and action are regarded as attributes of the self, and the attributes of an entity cannot leave the entity and cannot manifest themselves in places where the entity is not present. Either the self is to be regarded as moving speedily to all parts of the body or its consciousness, which is its attribute, should be regarded as pervading the entire body. The second alternative is inconsistent with the nature of an attribute. The first would mean that all the parts of the body are not endowed with life and consciousness at the same time. The constant movement of the self to all the parts of the body is also not admitted by the thinkers in general of these schools.

Moreover, according to these thinkers, the relation between the self and the psycho-physical organism is real and not apparent, though the identification of the self with the body or the mind is due to ignorance. How a real relation can exist between a noumenal spiritual atomic self and a phenomenal non-spiritual organism extended in space is inexplicable. It cannot be a relation of conjunction, because this relation can exist only between two substances of the same nature and with spatial properties. Nor can it be a relation of inherence, because the relation

between the self and the body is not eternal and essential, but the self can transcend the body and exist in the disembodied state. Nor can it be a relation of identity, because the self is regarded as substantially different from the material body. It may be said that a relation between them is possible, in as much as both are substances. But if the conception of substance is analysed, it appears that a noumenal spiritual entity and a phenomenal material entity are not substances in the same sense. Mere existence cannot be a ground of relation of two entities.

Again, the self is regarded as the true knower, feeler, willer and actor, and knowledge, feeling, will and action are regarded as progressive. If these are essential properties of the self, then the progressive character of these properties would mean the changing character of the essential nature of the self. But an atomic substance cannot have a changing nature, with its identity unaffected. If these are not its essential properties, the essential nature of the self must be regarded as unknown and unknowable, and the supposition of its existence would be useless. Several other difficulties have already been indicated.

No comment is necessary on the various supposed locations of the self within the body, because they are only unwarrantable conjectures. It is sometimes asserted that the particular locations of the self in the particular centres of the bodily organism are realised through meditation by the saints. Without raising any issue of fact, it may be replied that such realisations are the results of meditation and not the experiences of truth. If the self is supposed beforehand as present in some particular spot within the body, and then thought is concentrated on that point with that idea in the mind, some phenomenon appearing to be of the nature of direct experience is quite likely to happen. This does not amount to the real experience of the self in

that spot. The differences of so-called realisations among different saints also point to the same conclusion. Moreover, the self is conceived as the experiencer and not as the object of experience. What is therefore experienced in the particular spot within the body is evidently not the self, but some imaginary object intently contemplated upon ; the self which is the subject, and not the object of experience remains behind the experience and without any definite location for itself.

We have seen that the advocates of the atomic nature of the individual selves have sometimes described them as creations of God, sometimes as parts of God, sometimes as expressions of the intelligent Power of God, sometimes as spiritual embodiments of God, sometimes as the finite centres of experience of God, sometimes as finite manifestations of God, and so on. Each of these conceptions involves some logical difficulties. We need not dwell on these difficulties here, because we had occasions to deal with them in connection with the discussion on the various conceptions of God and His relation to the individual selves and the world. Nor is it necessary here to deal with their different conceptions about the nature of the selves in the state of liberation, because liberation forms the subject-matter of a distinct chapter. Here we have only pointed out in a general way the logical difficulties in the way of the acceptance by a rational mind of the atomic conception of the individual selves.

V. Self conceived as infinite, eternal and innumerable and possessing the qualities of knowledge, feeling and will :—

A. Exposition :—

In the foregoing sections we have found that the self is conceived by some sects as materialistic or evolved out of

material substances, by some as a non-material phenomenal flow of consciousness, by some as a non-material finite substance of the size of the body and subject to expansion and contraction and movement, by some others as a non-material finite substance of atomic size, incapable of expansion and contraction, but capable of movement and qualitative development and degradation. According to all these views, there are different selves related to different bodies. Now we proceed to the examination of several theories, which though differing in various respects, agree in holding that the self is infinite and eternal, all-pervading and unchanging.

In this section we propose to deal with some theories, according to which there are countless infinite and eternal selves, which possess the qualities of knowledge, feeling, will and effort. The existence of such a noumenal spiritual self in relation to each living body is, according to some classes of thinkers, known by direct intuitive experience, and according to others, known by inference.

Knowledge, will, pleasure, pain, effort, etc., are universally experienced by all men. These being attributes, must belong to some substance. What is the substance to which these attributes can possibly belong? They cannot of course belong to the changing material body. The very conception of matter implies that it cannot be possessed of these attributes. The body is an object of knowledge, and cannot be its subject. It is moved and regulated by the power of the will, and cannot itself be its own mover and the possessor of the will-power. It is always changing and cannot be the knower of these changes. Pleasure and pain are not felt by the body, for in that case a dead body also would have felt them. Nor can the attributes of knowledge, will, etc., belong to the special sense-organs,

which are only the instruments of knowledge and action. Knowledge and will are not lost through the loss of the eyes or ears or other sense-organs. The impressions received by the senses must be presented to some knower within in order that the knowledge of any object may be produced through the combination and interpretation of these impressions. The senses cannot even receive the impressions, unless the mind is associated with them and attention is paid to the objects. The hands, the feet, and the other senses of action cannot move by themselves, unless they are urged on from within by some moving will. Thus knowledge, will, etc., cannot be inherent in the senses. The mind also cannot be the real possessor of these attributes. The mind is the instrument through which the self knows, feels, wills and acts and upon which it depends for these phenomena. The mind is an atomic entity standing between the self and the senses, and its operation consists in establishing the relation between the self and the senses. It is owing to the operation of the mind that there is succession in and organisation of knowledge and feeling and will and action. If the self were identical with the mind, all cognitions, feelings and volitions would arise at the same time, owing to its association with senses and the body. In the absence of any difference between the mind and the possessor of these attributes, the systematic experiences of the particular cognitions and emotions and volitions could not be accounted for.

For all these and similar other reasons the existence of a permanent self distinguished from the body and the senses and the mind must be admitted. This self is the changeless entity which furnishes explanation for knowledge, feeling, will and action, it must be conceived as a substance of which these are the attributes. These

attributes, however, cannot be regarded as constituting the essential nature of the self. They are related to the self and exhibit themselves through its contact with the mind and the senses. When this contact ceases, the self is divested of these attributes. So long as ignorance and false knowledge continues about its own transcendent nature, the self is subject to attachment and aversion, which lead to world-ward activities in the embodied state and consequent bondage of sorrow and repetition of births and deaths. When perfect knowledge is attained about the real nature of the knower, the knowable and the true means of knowing, the self knows itself as essentially free from the bondage of the mind, senses and the body, turns away and becomes dissociated from them and thereby becomes emancipated from the qualities of knowledge, feeling, will and action. It is the beginningless destiny (i. e. some unseen power) associated with the eternal self, that was the cause of its relation with the mind, attachment to worldly objects and repeated births. This destiny was the product of actions and was in its turn the determinant cause of further actions and enjoyments and sufferings. The process continued from time without beginning. This is the law of *Karma*. When perfect knowledge is attained and attachment and aversion are shaken off, no new destiny of the self is created and the old destiny is destroyed after running its course. If death occurs after the attainment of this perfect knowledge, the self is then free from destiny, free from the necessity of entering into any other body, free from relation to the mind, free from the consciousness of ego or individuality, and free from the attributes of knowledge, feeling and will. It exists in this perfectly liberated state through eternity. It is a state of absolute emancipation from the possibility of sorrow, and

in this state the self has no consciousness, no enjoyment, no function.

Since the bondage and liberation, the happiness and misery, the true knowledge and false knowledge, the birth and death, etc., of one individual are not identical with those of another, each individual must be regarded as having an individual self. Thus we must believe in the existence of innumerable selves. Though these selves, owing to their beginningless contact with particular minds, are subject to such limitations as are imposed upon them by the attributes of imperfect knowledge, feeling and will, — though they are accordingly subject to pleasure and pain, ignorance and truth-realisation, bondage and liberation,—they are not limited in time and space. Since they are non-material simple entities, the temporal and spatial limitations cannot pertain to their nature. They are therefore unchangeable, unmodifiable, infinite and all-pervading. If the self had been changing, it would require another changeless spiritual entity to know these changes and to be the ground of the unification of its changing cognitions, emotions and volitions. If the self had been of a limited or atomic size, various difficulties, as pointed out in connection with the previously discussed views, would arise. The self must therefore be regarded as above space and in that sense pervading the entire space. But as each self is related to the objective world through a particular mind, a particular conglomeration of senses and a particular body, it appears in its mundane life to be confined to a portion of space and to be passing through various changing conditions.

There are some schools of thought, which instead of conceiving knowledge, feeling, volition and effort as *attributes* somehow related *ab extra* with the self by way of

the relation of Inherence in its mundane state and disappearing from it at the time of liberation, interpret them as constituting the power of the self. The self, according to them, is the potency of knowledge, etc. This power is manifested in the forms of actual cognitions, feelings and volitions through its connection with the mind and the senses, which also are moved by the energy of the self. It is the beginningless *Karma* or destiny belonging to the self, which keeps up the contact between the self and the mind, produces body after body for the fruition of *karma* and gives rise to various cognitions, feelings and actions. In the state of liberation, there is the destruction of *Karma*, the dissolution of the body, the absence of any cause for the production of fresh bodies, the cessation of the connection between the self and the mind. The self then remains eternally in its essential character as the pure potency of knowledge, etc. without any actual expression or manifestation, without any phenomenal consciousness or feeling, without either sorrow or bliss.

We have given above a brief account of the conception of all-pervading individual selves as the ultimate seats of the attributes or powers of knowledge, feeling, will and effort, and dependent upon their connection with minds for their expressions. We have noted briefly the mode of reasoning on which the conception is based. But according to some classes of exponents of this view, it is not merely by such inferential processes that the existence of such selves is known. Every man directly perceives the self in his knowledge. Knowledge, it is held, is an undeniable fundamental fact and it is self-illumined. Knowledge necessarily involves at the same time the experience of three factors, viz. the knower, the known and the relation between the two. The knower is the self, the known is the object

and knowledge is the consciousness of the relation between the self and the object. The consciousness of 'I' as the knowing subject is inseparable from all cognitions. In all cases of knowing an object, feeling pleasure or pain, performing or refraining from performing any action, I am conscious of myself as knowing the object, myself as feeling the pleasure or pain, myself as performing or not performing the action. The consciousness of the self is thus involved in all consciousness or experience. That the self or 'I', as cognised in all knowledge, is distinguished essentially from the body, the senses and the mind, is evident enough. All these are changing, all these are objects and instruments of experience; but the subject self remains unchanging behind them in all cases. All these changing objects and instruments of knowledge are objects and instruments for the same unchanging subject. 'I' or the self is thus manifested in actual experience in all cases of cognition, volition and emotion as the changeless substance to which all cognitions, volitions and emotions belong, but which transcends all particularisations and modifications involved in them. This self is not accordingly itself conscious or feeling or acting, but the attributes or powers or functions of consciousness, feeling and action must be referred to it.

Some philosophers maintain that the consciousness of the self is not merely involved in the cognition of all objects, but it is itself an object of mental perception. I actually perceive myself as distinguished from all my cognitions, emotions, volitions and actions, as existing behind all changes of physical and mental states. This self-consciousness or consciousness of 'I' shines by its own light. The self is in this case actually experienced as the subject as well as the object, while in cases of the

cognitions of other objects the consciousness of the self is involved only as the subject or cogniser. It should be noted, however, that according to the views of these philosophers the self-consciousness does not pertain to the essential nature of the self apart from relation to the mind; it is always through the operation of the mind that actual consciousness or cognition arises in the self. The self cannot know itself as existent, when it is released from contact with the mind, or even when the mind is in a state of complete rest. Self-consciousness, therefore, is a mental perception.

Now, though in my self-consciousness I apparently think of myself as existing within the body and thus locate myself in a particular portion of space, this should not be construed as proving that the self is limited in space and is either of atomic or of medium size. The self has really no size at all in spatial terms. Our knowledge itself furnishes adequate evidence for it. In my thought of objects I always transcend my body as well as the objects. I can think of and acquire valid knowledge of objects with which there is no possibility of sense-contact. I can think of general classes in abstraction from particular objects of sense-experience. I can think of the past and the future. I can think of space and time as such. I can think of the world-system as a whole. All such thoughts involve the presence of my self as the thinking subject along with the objects of thought. If the self had been really limited in space and time, it could not have made infinite space and time the objects of its thought and cognition, it could not be the knower of the world-system and of the ultimate cause of the world. The self must therefore be regarded as essentially infinite and eternal. Its self-identification with the mind or its self-location in some part of the body is due to the fact that in its embodied state it

always looks upon and perceives itself through the mind and in relation to the body and its powers or attributes is always realised in the world through the instrumentality of the mind and the sense-organs. At the time of such cognition of itself as limited, it forgets that though operating through the mind and the body it transcends the mind and the body, that though its instruments are limited in space and time, it is itself above space and time,—that it is an infinite substance expressing itself in the world through finite instruments in a finite body as the substratum of finite attributes and actions. When ignorance about its nature is destroyed, its connection with the finite body and finite instruments and finite attributes and actions ceases, and it rests eternally in its infinite attributeless actionless consciousnessless existence.

B. Criticism:—

The conception of self explained here is based upon commonsense. We all know and feel and will and act. That the phenomena of knowledge, feeling, will and action demand the recognition of a knowing, feeling, willing and acting substance cannot be denied by commonsense. It is also to be admitted that this substance must be one in each individual, because otherwise there could be no harmony and co-operation among knowledge, feeling, will and action and no systematisation in life. Knowledge could be of no help in directing activities towards pleasurable objects and checking the propensities directed towards painful objects, if knowledge had belonged to one agent, the feelings of pleasure and pain to another, and will and action to a third. Remembrance of past experiences also would not be possible, if the experiencer and the rememberer had not been the same identical subject. And so on.

Commonsense thus demands the existence in each living being of one identical substance as the agent behind all its phenomena of knowledge, feeling, will and action, all its states of waking, dreaming and sleeping, all its virtuous and vicious deeds and its enjoyments and sufferings of their pleasurable and painful consequences. That neither the material body nor the plurality of senses can be this permanent identical agent is evident enough.

From this point the theory has to rely on rather uncertain grounds of inference. The mind, which is directly related to the senses, is for various logical reasons not accepted as the ultimate knowing, feeling and willing subject, and the existence of a changeless permanent self distinguished from the mind is established. This self is logically proved to be infinite, eternal and one for each individual.

But can this conception of the self supply an adequate and consistent explanation for the phenomena, on the strength of which it is established? The self is conceived as possessing the attributes or powers of knowledge, feeling, will and effort. Now, what is the relation between the self and its attributes or powers? According to this view, the attributes or powers are regarded as essentially distinct from the substance to which they belong, and the relation between them is described as Inherence. Here the question is, are attributes of knowledge, etc., eternally inherent in the self or produced from some causes and then related to it?

If they are eternally related to the self, then they must be regarded as pertaining to the nature of the self and it is only by logical abstraction that we can conceive the self and its attributes separately. In that case there cannot

possibly be at any time the actual separation of the self from its attributes. But the advocates of this theory assert that at the state of liberation, the self is divested of its attributes. This is evidently inconsistent with the eternal relation between the self and its attributes. On the other hand, as the presence of these attributes is regarded as the source of bondage and sorrow to the self, if the emancipation of the self from these attributes be not possible, its liberation from bondage and sorrow also would be impossible.

It may be said that though the relation between the self and its attributes of knowledge, etc., is temporally eternal, they do not pertain to the essential nature of the self, but are associated with it due to *adriṣta* or destiny; this *adriṣta* being destroyed in liberation, the relation also ceases. *Adriṣta* or destiny is evidently an assumption, for which adequate rational grounds are unavailable. Common sense may suppose the production of some *adriṣta* or invisible power to bring about a connection between actions and the pleasurable or painful consequences they are apparently found to produce upon the agents after an interval of time. The belief in the distinction between virtue and vice and in the causal connection between virtue and happiness and between vice and misery requires the belief that virtuous and vicious actions create some kind of moral energy capable of producing in course of time good and evil consequences upon the agents, and this moral energy being invisible is called *adriṣta* (invisible). This leads to the conception of the universal Law of Karma. Since all enjoyments and sufferings of an individual as well as the mental and material conditions from which these enjoyments and sufferings are actually perceived to follow must according to this law be explained as the products of

adrista arising from virtuous and vicious deeds previously performed by the same individual, it is found necessary to admit previous life of the individual and his actions in that life to account for the favourable and unfavourable mental and material circumstances in which he is born and the enjoyments and sufferings caused by them. This process must continue backward *ad infinitum*. Thus we find that the belief in *adrista* is based upon the fundamental assumption that an individual can and must enjoy and suffer in accordance with the merits and demerits produced by his own actions. This assumption is far from being logically proved.

Even if this assumption be granted, it is difficult to lay down any general principle according to which the *adrista* operates. Various suggestions have been made by different schools of philosophers, and each of them is found to be beset with insoluble difficulties. We are not particularly concerned with them here. But we find that *adrista* always presupposes previous actions. *Adrista* being necessarily the product of actions cannot be said to be eternally associated with the self. Before *adrista* was attached to the self, the self must have had previous actions. The actions presuppose knowledge, feeling, will and effort. Hence the relation of these attributes with the self cannot be accounted for by reference to *adrista*. Accordingly, if these attributes are eternally associated with the self, they must be regarded as pertaining to the essential nature of the self and the questions raised before would be unanswerable. If *adrista* and these attributes are both eternally related to the self, then also the former is to be explained by reference to the latter, and not the latter by reference to the former. Otherwise eternal *adrista* should mean nothing but the inherent capacity of the self to possess these attributes.

Let us now consider the validity of the eternal relation of the attributes of knowledge, etc. with the self from another point of view, leaving aside the question of the possibility of liberation. Every self is supposed to be infinite and all-pervading, and also endowed with these attributes. If this be so, all the objects of the world must be supposed to be present before every individual self at the same time. In that case, there is no reason why every self should not know all the present objects of the universe at every moment of its existence, why every self should not at the same time experience all pleasurable and painful feelings that may arise from its contact with all kinds of worldly objects, why every self should not exercise its power of action upon and cause movements in all material bodies. Every self being free from temporal and spatial limitations, what is there to set limits to its knowledge, feeling and action with regard to the objects of this temporal and spatial world ?

Common sense is of course bound to admit the fact that there are actual limits to the knowledge, feeling and power of action of the individual selves. Philosophical speculation may, however, lead us to the conclusion that the actual experience of the limitations to the knowledge etc. of individual living beings is due to extraneous reasons, but the selves in their essential character suffer from no such limitations. If any rational ground for such conclusion be available, then further difficulties would arise as to the necessity of recognising the existence of a plurality of such infinite selves. If the limitations, to which the individuals are experienced to be subject, do not really pertain to the selves, but are only falsely attributed to them or only appear due to certain extraneous reasons in the presence of them, then what is the necessity for admitting that

each individual has got one individual self ? Individuality is actually found to consist of the limitations. If the imitations are absent from the self, its individuality also should be regarded as absent. That is to say, there may really exist only one infinite eternal universal self, possessing unlimited knowledge, feeling and power of activity, and the individual living beings may have their limited and changing individuality caused by some extraneous limiting conditions and their apparent individual selves may be only particularised manifestations of the infinite self.

According to the view under examination, there exists really a plurality of infinite all-pervading noumenal selves, and each self, though eternally possessing the attributes or powers of knowledge, feeling, will and effort, is not actually possessed of universal knowledge, etc., because its actual knowing, feeling, willing and acting depend upon its connection with a particular mind. The mind, according to this view, is the instrument of knowing, feeling, willing and acting, and without the operation of this instrument, the phenomena of knowledge, etc. cannot occur. Since the mind cannot come in contact with all objects at the same time, the self cannot have knowledge, etc. regarding all objects at the same time. The mind again cannot come in direct contact with material objects; it comes in contact with the external objects mediately through the senses. Actual knowledge, etc. are accordingly conditional upon the capacities and operations of the mind and the senses in relation with the variety of objects.

This explanation also cannot solve the difficulties. The question arises,—every self being essentially infinite, why should not each self have connection with all minds ? How can a self be regarded as all-pervading if it is in contact only

with one mind, and if innumerable minds, innumerable senses, innumerable bodies and innumerable material realities remain external to and unconnected with it ? It is sometimes said that the question should not be raised, because it is not a case of the previous unconnected independent existence of a plurality of infinite selves and a plurality of finite minds and the later production of the association between particular selves and particular minds ; there is the unoriginated eternal connection of particular selves with particular minds. If this reasoning is accepted, then the character of the self as related to and conditioned by the mind ought reasonably to be regarded as constituting the true character of the self, and not the character of the self as unrelated to and unconditioned by the mind. The self as related to and conditioned by the mind, being finite and limited, being confined to a particular sphere of the world in time and space and being liable to development and degradation should accordingly be regarded as the true self. If the self as conditioned by the mind be the eternally existent concrete individual reality, the conception of the self as distinct from the mind would evidently be a logical abstraction, and an abstraction cannot be real substance. In that case it would be meaningless to maintain that the self is really an infinite all-pervading eternal substance inherently possessing the attributes of the knowledge, etc. and that the mind coming in contact with it makes possible the finite and relative functions of knowledge, feeling, will and effort. Further, in that case it would be irrational to hope that at any time the self should be emancipated from its contact with the mind, from the attribute and functions of knowledge, etc. and from the sorrows arising from such relations.

Even if the individual selves distinct and dissociated from the particular minds be regarded as real substances,

the very idea that each self is an individual separate from other similar individuals and liable to be associated with a particular mind and not with other minds, appears to be inconsistent with the idea that every such self is infinite or all-pervading. The existence of each self limits and is limited by the existence of every other self, and the inherent capacity or liability of each self to be associated with a particular mind indicates its finitude and distinctive particular nature.

An attempt may be made to reconcile the idea of the infinity of each individual self with the idea of its being in contact with a particular finite mind and its being related to the world only through that mind, by pointing out that the selves are not infinite and all-pervading in the sense that they are spread over the entire space, but in the sense that they are above space. If a self had been an entity occupying either any portion of space or the entire expanse of space, it would be an aggregate of and divisible into parts and thus of the nature of a destructible material entity. Space and time being objects of knowledge, the self which is the subject of knowledge must be above space and time. Each self is all-pervading in as much as it has no spatial limitations and also in as much as the entire space and all the objects in space may be related to it as the objects of its knowledge. But there cannot be any direct conjunction between what is above space and what is in space, between a non-material substance and a material substance. If such conjunction were possible, one would limit the other. Hence it is through the mediation of the mind, that the self becomes related to the objective world. The mind again comes in contact with the material objects of the world through the mediation of the senses.

But this interpretation also cannot fully evade the difficulty. Is the mind material or non-material? If the mind be regarded as material, how can there be any direct relation between the non-material self and the material mind? If the mind be regarded as non-material, how can there be any direct contact between the mind and the sense-organs? If the senses also be regarded as non-material, how can there be any direct contact between the senses and the material objects? Conjunction between any two non-material supra-spatial entities also is of course inadmissible, because otherwise there would be direct relation of conjunction among the selves.

If again *adriṣta* or *karma* be regarded as determining the relation between a particular self and a particular mind, the relation between the self and the *adriṣta* or *karma* on the one hand and that between the *adrista* or *karma* and the mind on the other would be similarly inexplicable. If the infinity or all-pervadingness of the selves be inferred as the only possible alternative, on the ground of the insurmountable difficulties in the way of conceiving them as atomic or of limited size or of the nature of a continuous process, the conception of them as infinite or all-pervading also being vitiated by similar logical difficulties has to be abandoned. Hence the nature of the selves remains inexplicable, on the assumption of their being eternally possessed of the attributes of knowledge, feeling, will and effort.

Let us now briefly examine the validity of the conception of the attributes of knowledge, etc. being produced in the selves. This alternative is obviously inconsistent with the idea of the selves we are discussing here. If the attributes are produced in time and added on by

what is called the relation of Inherence to the selves, then the selves in their essential nature must be conceived as not possessed of these attributes and as actually existing without them before their production and after their destruction. Since no other attributes are thought of, the selves must in this view be conceived as essentially attributeless. This idea of attributeless selves is not accepted by the schools of thought represented in this section.

Again, the production of attributes and their being related to substances must be due to adequate causes. The general rule (admitted by the exponents of this view) is that when an effect is produced from a cause or combination of causes, the attributes inherent in the cause or causes produce the attributes, which are related to the effect. But the selves are not the effects of any causes. How and wherefrom should the new attributes be produced and come to be related to the selves? It is argued that the contact of an indiviuual self with a particular mind is the cause of the production of these attributes in the self. But what are the attributes inherent in the self and the mind, from which these attributes of knowledge, etc. may possibly be produced in the self? The elementary attributes of knowledge, etc. are not regarded as produced or derived from any other attributes, and in the self and the mind no such attributes are supposed to be present, from the combination of which the attributes of knowledge, etc. can in any way be produced. Even if they could be so produced, there is no reason why they should be produced in relation to the self instead of to the mind. The logical conclusion would on such a supposition be that an effect would be produced from the combination of the self and the mind, and the attributes of knowledge, etc. which

should be produced from the attributes of the self and the mind, would be attached to that effect or compound substance. This is not admitted.

Moreover, if the attributes of knowledge, etc. be non-eternal and the products of the association of the self with the mind, this association also being an event in time must have some cause. How can a self, essentially devoid of these attributes, come in contact with a mind and be endowed with these attributes? No cause for the origination of such a relation between a self and a mind is conceivable. *Adriṣta* cannot be supposed to be the cause, because the presence of *adriṣta* in relation to the self, which presupposes *Karma*, is not conceivable in the absence of the attributes and the mind-contact. This association between the self and the mind is therefore to be regarded as due to mere chance, which is evidently no explanation at all. Further, if by chance a free self can be associated with a mind, a group of senses and a body and can thus be subject to bondage and limitation and sorrow, there can be no prospect of the attainment of liberation for good, because every liberated self will have the chance of similarly coming under bondage again.

To avoid chance-hypothesis, reference is sometimes made to the will of God by some sections of the advocates of this view. But the existence of God as the designer and creator and regulator of the universe and the ordainer of the relation of the selves with particular *adriṣta* and particular minds, is itself a matter of controversy among different schools of philosophers. Even among the advocates of the conception of the selves as infinite and possessing the attributes or powers of knowledge, etc. there is an illustrious school of philosophers, who stubbornly deny the

existence of God. Apart from this controversy, the appeal to the Divine will cannot be of much help in solving the difficulty raised here. The Divine will, if recognised as the ruler of the destinies of the selves, must be believed to act either arbitrarily or according to some definite and intelligible law. If the Divine will arbitrarily attaches different kinds of *adriṣta* to different free selves and thereby brings them down to the world to pass through different kinds of pleasures and sorrows, it may act in the same arbitrary fashion upon the selves liberated through right knowledge and good action. If on the other hand there is any law of the operation of the Divine will, the law must be ascertained ; but no law is found to rationally explain the alleged operation of the Divine will.

Some philosophers try to evade the difficulties with regard to the relation between the self and the attributes of knowledge, etc. by asserting that the self is a substance essentially possessing the powers of knowing, feeling, etc. Thus the selves are conceived as by nature the seats of energy or power, which manifests itself in the phenomena of knowledge, feeling, will and action. But this interpretation also cannot be consistently maintained. If the infinite selves are essentially of such nature, why should they not be able to know and feel all objects of the world present before them at the same time, why should not each of them have infinite power of knowledge and action, why should their capacity to know and act be conditioned by the particular finite minds and senses related to particular bodies? The logical difficulties in the way of consistently answering these questions remain as before.

Further, if this power constitutes the essential nature of a self, how can it be maintained that the transformations or modifications of this power in actual phenomena do not

involve changes in the essential nature of the self? The power must be conceived either as different or as non-different from the self. If it be regarded as different from the self, the question of the relation between the self and the power (whether eternal or non-eternal) remains as much beset with difficulties as in the case of its being regarded as an attribute. If on the other hand it be regarded as non-different from the self, the self would be subject to transformations and would not be a changeless noumenal entity. Moreover, if in the state of liberation also the self exists as the potency of knowledge, etc., there is no reason why the potency should not have the probability of manifesting itself into phenomenal actuality again and dragging the self again into bondage and sorrow. Thus the substitution of the notion of power for the notion of attribute is of no substantial help in rationally sustaining this conception of the self.

With regard to the consciousness of 'I' involved in all cognitions, volitions etc., it is enough to say that it is a fact which is, as it must be, admitted by all, including even those who identify the 'I' with the body and those who regard the 'I' as a flow of consciousness. This consciousness, or what is sometimes spoken of as perception, of the 'I' or ego or self gives us no definite clue as to the ultimate nature of the self. Hence the conception of the self, held by these schools of thought, is not thereby established.

VI. Self conceived as infinite eternal self-luminous consciousness, many in number, but without any attribute :—

A. Exposition :—

According to another widely accepted philosophical view there is an infinite number of selves, each of which is

an eternal infinite self-luminous pure consciousness, without any attribute or power. It has no spatial or temporal limitation, no change or modification, no real association or conjunction with the mind or body. It is in its own nature eternally pure,–untouched by the impurities and modifications and limitations, which pertain to the nature of the intelligence, the ego, the internal and external senses and the physical body. It is in itself knowledgeless, feelingless will-less and actionless. But it is on account of the presence of the self–luminous self, though without any active interference on its part, that the intelligence, the ego, the senses and the body can operate, can perform their respective functions, can manifest and transform and organise themselves. It is the luminosity of such an individual self that illumines and reveals all these factors, the organisation of which constitutes the experienced individuality of a living being.

It is held that the psycho-physical system is by itself without any consciousness, without any self-revealing power. The physical body is constituted of five gross material elements organised and sustained by a life-power which also is material. The gross material elements are evolved out of five subtle material elements, characterised by pure sound, pure touch, pure colour, pure taste and pure smell. There are five special senses of knowing and five special senses of acting, which are respectively related to the five particular kinds of objective realities, and these realities on account of their amalgamation are actually experienced as five aspects of every concrete objective reality, including the body. The mind in its restricted significance is regarded as the internal sense, which is endowed with cognitive, emotional as well as volitional functions and which controls and organises the functions of both kinds of special senses.

Neither the mind nor the senses are self-luminous and self-determining. The necessary subject-object-relation between the mind and the special senses on the one side and the elementary objective realities on the other leads to the inevitable conclusion that they are evolved out of the same source, and this source is found in the Ego-consciousness. It is the Ego which evolves out of its unitary nature the subjective senses and the objective elements. The Ego-consciousness is evolved out of and illumined by non-egoised non-individuated general consciousness or Intelligence. This Intelligence or general consciousness becomes individuated and self-conscious in the Ego. But this Intelligence also cannot be regarded as a self-luminous and absolutely non-material entity, because it is of a phenomenal nature,–of the nature of a flow or stream of consciousness, being modified and transformed into particularised ego and particular subjective and objective experiences. What is of the nature of a flow, what is of a changing and modifying character, cannot be a self-luminous spiritual entity and cannot therefore be the ultimate source of knowledge, feeling and will. This phenomenal consciousness may be destroyed, in the sense that it may pass into an unmanifested state.

Every entity subject to modification and evolution has in its nature a relatively potential or unmanifested factor, a factor of the process of actualisation or the activity of manifestation, and a factor of actual manifestation. Every phenomenal entity is made of these three factors,–the first operating as inertia or obstruction to fuller manifestation, the second operating as the tendency to evolution or fuller manifestation, and the third representing the manifested and illumined state. There is as it were a tug-of-war among these factors. The more the latter factors predominate over

the first, the greater the tendency towards evolution, and the more the first predominates, the greater the tendency towards destruction. When there is perfect equilibrium among these factors, the phenomenal entity is in perfectly unmanifested state. Whatever can pass into the completely unmanifested state, cannot be regarded as self-manifesting, self-illumining, self-existent reality. It requires the existence of some other self-luminous self-existent entity, which without being itself changed or modified should illumine, reveal and witness its existence, manifestation, changes and modifications, without which it would remain eternally in an unmanifested state and its existence would be as good as non-existence.

According to this mode of reasoning, the phenomenal consciousness also cannot be a self-manifesting, self-illumining and self-existent reality. Though this phenomenal consciousness is found to be the source of the manifestation and illumination of the ego-consciousness as well as all mental, sensuous, bodily and worldly phenomena (of which the ego-consciousness is at the centre), it must owe its own manifestation and illumination, as well as its manifesting and illumining power, to some self-existent, self-luminous, non-phenomenal, unchanging reality. It is this reality which is the true self. It is in the presence and due to the presence of this self-luminous self that the phenomenal consciousness is illumined and acquires the illumining power—the power of revealing the ego, the mind, the senses, the body and the material objects as they are evolved. The light of knowledge, which the phenomenal consciousness throws on all subjective and objective phenomena, is reflected light,—light reflected on it from the self-luminous self. The self, without undergoing any modification or making any effort, witnesses the modifying

phenomenal consciousness and whatever appear to, evolve out of and are illumined by it. When the self ceases to witness and illumine the phenomenal consciousness, the latter passes into the unmanifested state,—the state of pure possibility or potentiality without any actual manifestation, the state of pure energy, which may be said to be potentially everything and actually nothing. This Energy is thus the ultimate source of all phenomenal existences — all consciousnesses and egos, all minds and senses, all material elements and compounds, all objects of knowledge, feeling and will. It is from this absolute Energy that they are all evolved and it is in the absolute Energy that they are ultimately merged or dissolved.

It is to be further noted that the phenomenal consciousness not only requires the self for its being manifested and illumined, but it is for the sake of or in the interest of the self that this consciousness evolves itself and undergoes its regular modifications. No non-self-existent non-self-luminous transformable phenomenal being can have any ultimate self-interest of its own. Such a being never operates for its own sake. It cannot be evolved for its own sake nor can it be destroyed for its own sake. It can not itself be the knower, regulator and enjoyer of its own evolutions and transformations, because it is not self-luminous and constant. On the other hand, without any interest to serve, without any purpose to accomplish, no systematic regulated process is conceivable. It is only a self-existent self-luminous noumenal being, remaining unchanged in the midst of changes, witnessing the modifications without itself undergoing any modification, which can possibly have some intrinsic self-interest in itself and for the sake of which the regulated changes and modifications can possibly occur. Accordingly all the systematic operations of the phenomenal

consciousness and its phenomenal evolutes the ego, the mind, the senses and the body must be for the sake of serving some purpose of the changeless self-luminous witness self.

The purpose which this self-luminous changeless self can possibly have is twofold, viz. enjoyment *bhōga* and *émancipation* (*mōksha*). Thus it is to serve the purpose of enjoyment and emancipation of the ever-present witness self that phenomenal consciousness manifests, moves, evolves and transforms itself, originates various kinds of subjective and objective experiences, and exhibits itself as a system of mutually related subjects, objects and instruments of knowledge, feeling, will and action, in accordance with universal laws and principles. So long as the phenomenal consciousness shows itself with its transformations to the self, as if they are its own, as if they really belong to it, as if its existence and nature are conditioned by them, the purpose which is served by the phenomenal consciousness is describable as the enjoyment of the self. This enjoyment involves pleasurable as well as painful experiences,—experiences which create further desire for getting them as well as those which create desires for avoiding them. The actual experiences are of course in the phenomenal consciousness, but they being illumined by the luminosity of the self and presented to it as its own appear as the experiences of the self itself. The self being reflected on them appears to be variously affected by the experiences of the phenomenal consciousness, and it appears to identify itself with the phenomenal consciousness and the ego, and even with the mind and the body. But in reality the self is not touched or modified by these experiences of the phenomenal consciousness, but only illumines them and reveals their nature. As a result of reflection (which also occurs in the

phenomenal consciousness) upon all these experiences, they are in course of time regarded as sources of sorrow and bondage to the self, and a feeling of detachment and aversion grows towards all the diverse kinds of experiences, external as well as internal, objective as well as subjective, pleasurable as well as painful. This awakens in the consciousness the demand for a course of systematic physical and mental discipline, careful intellectual speculation and deep spiritual meditation for getting rid of these sorrow-producing experiences. At last the phenomenal consciousness is blessed with the insight that it is the identification of the changeless self-luminous free self with this consciousness and its modifications and experiences which is the root of all sorrows, and that the realisation of the true unrelated infinite eternal self-luminous transcendent nature of the self is the only way to perfect emancipation from the possibility of all sorrows. When the phenomenal consciousness is ultimately modified into this form of the realisation of the self, when it becomes perfectly pure, serene, tranquil and transparent so as to reflect upon itself the true character of the self, it fulfils its ultimate purpose, viz. the emancipation of the self and has no further necessity to modify and transform and diversify itself. It is then merged in the unmanifested nature of absolute Energy, while the self shines by itself in its eternal infinite unrelated attributeless self-luminous transcendent character.

A perplexing question arises here. If the self is essentially a pure, attributeless, infinite, unrelated, self-luminous entity, how can it ever come in contact with the phenomenal consciousness, which has no point of community with it, and what can be the character of the contact between them? The question is sought to be answered in this

way. The relation between the noumenal self-luminous self and the phenomenal non-self-luminous consciousness cannot admittedly be of the nature of real conjunction or of inherence. It is not of the nature of a relation between two spatial and temporal substances not of the nature of a relation between a substance and its attribute or a cause and its effect or an agent and its action or an individual and a class. This relation cannot therefore be defined in terms of any of the real relations which we experience among the objective phenomena. It is a relation, which does not admit of comparison in all respects with any of our known relations. There is a relation of proximity between the two ; but it is not of the nature of spatial or temporal proximity, because the self is above space and time, and the phenomenal consciousness. though having a temporal flow, is above space. The proximity, without any barrier and without spatial or temporal conditions, is a unique form of conjunction, and this conjunction is of course without any beginning in time. On account of this conjunction of two absolutely different entities, each participates in the nature of the other and there is non-discrimination between the two. Thus the phenomenal consciousness, being illumined by the self, appears as endowed with the power of illuminating itself and all other objects and retaining its identity in the midst of all modifications, and the self appears as possessing phenomenal knowledge, feeling and will and activity, as passing through different modified states, as evolving itself into subjective and objective experiences and hence as suffering from bondage, limitation and sorrow. This amounts to the bondage of the self, and it is from this apparent bondage that the self seeks liberation. For the purpose of this liberation, the non-discrimination of the self from the phenomenal consciousness has to be destroyed

by right knowledge of the true changeless self-luminous transcendent character of the self as distinct from the changing non-self-luminous phenomenal character of the consciousness and its modifications. The ignorance of the true character of the self, its non-discrimination from the phenomenal consciousness and its modifications, as well as its discrimination from this consciousness through right knowledge, must of course pertain to this modifying consciousness and not to the eternally pure changeless self-luminous self.

It is to be added that since the phenomenal consciousness is originally evolved out of and finally merged in the undifferentiated unmanifested homogeneous Energy and must therefore be regarded as a modified form of that Energy, the relation between the self and the phenomenal consciousness must be conceived as the manifested form of the unaccountable beginningless relation between the self and that Primordial unmanifested Energy. The liberation of the self accordingly means its emancipation from this beginningless conjunction and non-discrimination with the Energy.

It is to be further noted that among the interpreters of this view there are two classes of thinkers. One class maintains that the Primordial Energy, which is the absolute equilibrium of the moments of potentiality, activity and actuality, has an inherent tendency and capacity to modify itself according to the eternal law of its own nature into the progressively manifested forms, and that the self related to it only illumines those manifested forms and appears illusorily as participating in and affected by their impurities, changes and limitations. Another class holds that the Primordial Energy, though possessing the said tendency and capacity, cannot by itself become kinetic and

modify itself into the manifested forms, independently of the relation with the Self, and that the self by its very presence in its proximity and the relation of non-discrimination with it moves it into self-manifesting activity. The phenomenal consciousness, ego, etc. may accordingly be regarded as the products of the apparent conjunction of the Energy with the self

Another important question arises in this connection. Is there only one self-luminous noumenal self, illumining and witnessing the countless individual phenomenal consciousnesses and egos and psycho-physical organisms, or are there different selves for different such individuals ? Have all the living beings essentially the same identical self or absolutely distinct selves ? According to the view expounded here, there exists ultimately a plurality of noumenal selves, and the necessity of recognising one absolute universal noumenal Self is denied. The Primordial Energy, which is the ultimate material cause of the entire phenomenal universe, which is the absolutely undifferentiated unindividuated unmanifested state of phenomenal existence, from which all kinds of differentiated phenomenal beings are originally evolved and into which they are finally dissolved, which cannot logically be further reduced to any other subtler and simpler form of existence, must be conceived as one single homogeneous whole. Though this Energy may be called *material* in the sense that it is not self-luminous, it should not be thought of as material in the sense in which the objects of sense-perception are material. It has no spatial properties like these objects, nor is it subject to origination and destruction like them. It is the ultimate source of the subjective as well as the objective world,—the source of all intellects, egos, minds and senses as well as of all objects of thought,

feeling, desire and perception. The plurality is here resolved into unity. The Ultimate Matter, which with its inexhaustible potentiality is transformed, from time without beginning, in accordance with its own law of evolution, into the diversities of subjective and objective phenomenal realities, and into which they are finally reduced through the process of destruction, is thus found to be one modifying substance. How can we adequately account for the origin of innumerable self-conscious individuals from this one material cause ? In this beginningless world-process there have been many individuals who have attained liberation, while others are suffering from bondage ; how can it be compatible with the absolute identity of all selves ? Among the countless individuals under bondage also, some are enjoying happiness while others are crying in agony, some are being born while others are dying, some are awake while others are sleeping or dreaming, some are devoted to the pursuit of absolute truth while others are engaged in the pursuit of transitory objects of particular desires, and so on. The same objective circumstances are sources of happiness to some and of misery to others. How can all these differences be accounted for, unless different selves are recognised to be related to the modifications of the same Energy ? If there were the same identical self in all the individual living bodies, then with the liberation of one all would be liberated, with the happiness of one all would be happy, and so on. Hence for the adequate explanation of all the phenomena of experience, the existence of an infinite plurality of pure self-luminous attributeless changeless selves and of one primordial Energy subject to modification must be admitted. When any individual realises in his phenomenal consciousness the pure character of the self, that self becomes indifferent to the modifying Energy and rests eternally in its sorrowless,

blissless, experienceless, relationless absolute self-luminous existence.

The infinite or all-pervading nature of each self is not inconsistent with its transcendent individuality. It is only the spatial or materialistic conception of infinity which is incompatible with the idea of plurality. If the self be conceived as existing in space with the property of impenetrability like any other material object of sense-perception, and if its infinitude be conceived as occupying the boundless space, it cannot of course leave room for a plurality of selves or even for a plurality of objects. But the self is not an object in space and is not possessed of the property of impenetrability. It transcends space, transcends the relation of subject and object, transcends the consciousness of individuality which involves the relative phenomenal consciousness of ego and non-ego. It is of the nature of pure noumenal self-luminous absolute consciousness. It cannot be thought of as existing here and not there, existing now and not then, existing in this relation and not in that relation. It cannot be thought of as having any kind of limitation. It is in this sense that it is infinite and all-pervading. There is no rational self-inconsistency in the recognition of a plurality of such eternal and infinite, all-pervading and all-transcending, unrelated and absolute noumenal selves.

The question may however be put in this form. If the recognition of one such self is sufficient to account for the phenomena of experience, what is necessity for the recognition of many? The answer to this question is, as has been pointed out before, that the recognition of the existence of only one such self is grossly inadequate to furnish rational explanation for the diverse kinds of experiences of different individuals. Thus the acceptance

of the existence of the plurality of noumenal selves is an epistemological and metaphysical as well as a moral and spiritual necessity. Each individual owes the origin of its individualized existence, life and consciousness to the apparent conjunction a distinct self to the Primordial Energy. The phenomena of the consciousness of each individual can be adequately explained only by reference to a distinct noumenal self ; the purposive moral activities of each individual and the enjoyments and sufferings of their moral consequences by the agent at some future time in spite of all physical and mental changes cannot be accounted for without the admission of a distinct permanent self in whose interest they are performed and which is the witness of those actions and those fruits and the relations among them. Further, the ideal of emancipation from bondage and sorrow and the spiritual efforts in that direction would be absolutely meaningless, if the existence of the perfect emancipated self—i. e. the self freed from the apparent conjunction with and non-discrimination from the modifying Energy and its evolutes, the self freed from apparent individuality and its limitations,—is not recognised as real. Thus the distinction between emancipated selves and selves under apparent bondage implies the plurality of noumenal selves.

Thus according to this view there is a countless plurality of self-existent and self-luminous, attributeless, changeless and infinite noumenal selves, apparently conjoined with and non-discriminated from one modifying Primordial Energy from eternity ; so long as non-discrimination continues, the self is under bondage and all cognitions, emotions and actions and the enjoyments and sufferings resulting from them are attributed to it ; when the true conception of the self is attained through

philosophical reflection and its transcendent character realised through deep meditation, the self is discriminated from Energy and its modifications, it becomes emancipated from bondage and shines by itself in its pure eternal self-luminous nature.

B. Criticism :—

We have briefly indicated the mode of reasoning which leads to the doctrine that the selves in their ultimate character are many in number and that each of them is an infinite eternal absolute self-luminous perfect entity Now let us reflect upon the doctrine and examine if it can furnish a satisfactory explanation for the facts of our experience and can consistently maintain itself.

First of all, it is held that each self, which is in itself pure and changeless and unrelated and is of an essentially different character from the Primordial Energy, is eternally associated with the latter, so as to remain till emancipation incapable of being even discriminated from it. How can this be logically maintained? How can it be related and unrelated at the same time? If it be originally unrelated from the Energy, there must be some sufficient ground and cause for this relation. It is universally admitted that nothing can happen without a sufficient cause for its occurrence. It is said that the association between the two is due to indiscrimination (अविवेककृत संयोग). But is the association due to indiscrimination or the indiscrimination due to association? Which is logically prior to which? The association can not be preceded by and caused by indiscrimination, because before association with the Energy the self must exist by itself and indiscrimination from the Energy is not possible. If on the other hand the association is the cause of indiscrimination,

the association remains unaccounted for. The difficulty is sought to be avoided by the assertion that indiscrimination and association are both without beginning (अनादि). What is meant is this that it is not a fact that at any period of time in the past, however remote, the selves and the Energy had existed separately in their isolated essential characters and then became associated with and indiscriminated from each other. They have been in truth eternally associated and have eternally participated in each other's characters. If this is admitted, fresh difficulties arise.

If the selves and the Energy be regarded as eternally associated, it can mean in plain language that the self-modifying and self-evolving material cause of the universe is eternally endowed with consciousness,—that the ultimate material cause of the phenomenal universe is eternally characterised not only by the inherent power of modifying itself into a coherent system of subjective and objective diversities, but also by the inherent power of illumining and revealing itself and its modifications. Or in another form of language it may be interpreted as meaning that consciousness, which is characterised by the power of illumining and revealing itself and all objects, is likewise inherently characterised by the power of creating or evolving all those diverse kinds of objects. In that case to recognise consciousness and the material cause—the selves and the Energy—as distinct entities would be to substantialise two abstract aspects of the same entity.

It is argued that in our normal experience the subject and the object, the knower and the knowable, the illuminer and illuminable, the witness and the changes, the enjoyer and the enjoyable are correlative, neither being conceivable without reference to the other. The idea of each is inseparably associated with the idea of the other, but *the one*

cannot be reduced to or deduced from the other. When we seek for the ultimate character of the subject, the knower, the illuminer, the witness, the enjoyer, we are logically led to the conception of the changless self-luminous pure consciousness ; when on the other hand we analyse and reflect upon the natures of the diverse kinds of knowable illuminable enjoyable changing objects and seek for their ultimate cause, we are led to the conception of the Primordial Energy. These two concepts are accordingly found to be associated, but they cannot be regarded as identical, nor can the one be regarded as the property of the other, nor can they be regarded as the two correlative aspects of the same ultimate Substance. They could have been regarded as identical, if the one could be reduced to or deduced from the other or if the ultimate meanings of the two could be shown to be the same. But this is not possible. They could have been regarded as the two aspects of the same ultimate Reality, if each of the ideas would be further analysed and reduced to a simpler idea, in which the two would lose their distinction. This also is not possible. Of the ultimate illuminer and the illuminable, the one cannot obviously be the property of the other. Hence it is concluded that two must be recognised as separate entities, though they are eternally associated with each other.

Against this our contention is that the conclusion could be accepted only on condition that a rational explanation for this association were available. But no such explanation is offered by the exponents of this view. Even no rationally intelligible conception can be formed about this association between the self and the Energy. They are said to be eternally associated. But what is the true nature of the association is not clearly explained. If the nature of the eternal association between the two is unintelligible and

unaccountable, is it not more reasonable to conceive of the associated whole or the organic unity of energy and consciousness as the ultimate Reality manifesting itself as the plurality of subjects and objects, than to regard the plurality of subjects and the cause of all objects as essentially independent ultimate realities and as somehow unaccountably associated with each other from beginningless eternity ? What can possibly be the nature of their association ? Admittedly it cannot be of the nature of spatial conjunction, because both the self and the Energy are above space. There can be no relation of Inherence between them, because though the relation is without beginning, they are conceived as independent realities capable of being separated from each other, and the relation between them is not analogous to that between substance and attribute or cause and effect or universal and particular, etc The relation is said to be of the nature of proximity. But has proximity any meaning apart from spatial or temporal nearness, both of which are of course inadmissible ? Moreover, if proximity in any sense be admitted to constitute the nature of the relation, this relation must be eternal and inalienable and emancipation would be impossible, because the Energy as well as each of the selves is regarded as infinite and all-pervading.

The exponents of this view however hold that it is not mere proximity, but proximity involving indiscrimination, which, though without any beginning, has an end, and though uncaused, is capable of being destroyed by right knowledge. Let us analyse the meaning of indiscrimination (अविवेक) and reflect upon its implications. It apparently means that the Energy and the selves are so intimately associated with each other that the essential nature of one cannot be distinguished from that of the other. The

exponents maintain that existentially the conscious selves remain eternally distinct from the unconscious Energy and their essential nature is in no way really affected by the nature of the Energy and its modifications ; but just as a colourless bright crystal in the proximity of a red *Jabá* flower appears red on account of the redness of the flower being reflected upon it and its own essential colourlessness cannot be distinguished from the colour of the flower so long as the association between them continues, in the same way every changeless self-luminous infinite self, being from the eternal past in the proximity of the changing non-luminous Energy, has the changes and transformations of the latter together with the efforts and resistances, cognitions and feelings, enjoyments and sufferings, arising in them, reflected upon it, and its essential nature cannot be discriminated from these reflected virtues and vices so long as discriminating knowledge (विवेकख्याति) is not acquired through the practice of true metaphysical speculation (तत्त्वविचार) and intense search for truth.

Now, what, according to this interpretation, does the indiscrimination imply ? Indiscrimination is not of course a substance which can exist by itself and can by its own right stand between the energy and each of the selves in some unaccountable relation and somehow bring about a relation between them. It must be of the nature of an attribute or a property or a function of some substance. It must belong to some subject, which fails to discriminate between two objects and mistakes the one for the other. Accordingly in the present case either (1) the selves themselves should be the subjects failing to distinguish themselves from the Primordial Energy and attributing its modifications to themselves, or (2) the Energy should be the subject failing to discriminate between itself

and the selves, or (3) this function of indiscrimination should pertain to both, or (4) the existence of some other indiscriminating subject must be recognised, to which both the Energy and the selves should be objects of experience and which should falsely ascribe the characteristics of the one to the others.

If we have to rely on the analogy of the bright crystal and the red flower, we ought to accept the fourth alternative, because the indiscrimination between the characters of two such objects can possibly occur only in the mind of an observing subject other than the two. In that case we have to assume the existence of a conscious subject other than the selves and the Energy and capable of making both of them the objects of its knowledge; this subject must also be regarded as liable to illusion and error and as existing co-eternally with the Energy and the selves. The existence of such a subject is not and cannot consistently be admitted by the exponents of the theory. The recognition of such a Subject would involve fresh difficulties with regard to the relation between that subject and the indiscriminated objects.

Of the three other alternatives, the first alone has some degree of plausibility. But the acceptance of this alternative would imply that the selves in their ultimate character are possessed of the faculty of knowing, that they can make themselves as well as the unconscious Energy the objects of their knowledge, that they are liable to ignorance and error about the nature of the objects, that they have the capacity of and the necessity for making efforts for the destruction of ignorance and error and the attainment of true knowledge, that they feel the sorrows arising out of ignorance and error and are thereby impelled to get rid of them and to seek for truth, and so on. All these are

inconsistent with the conception of the selves we are discussing. The admission of these implications would lead to the idea of changing conscious selves with various attributes and complexities and limitations in their nature and would also lead to various self-contradictions. Moreover, if the indiscrimination belonging to the selves be without any beginning and without any cause, it must be regarded as inherent in the essential nature of the selves and they cannot have any way of escape from it. In that case the selves as related to and indiscriminated from the Energy should be conceived as the true selves, while the selves as unrelated to and discriminated from the Energy and its modifications should be conceived as mere abstractions. The possibility of attaining perfect liberation should accordingly be denied.

The second alternative is obviously unacceptable, because the Energy is conceived as essentially unconscious and originally unmanifested. It is not possible for an unmanifested unconscious entity to perceive or know anything, whether rightly or wrongly. It may be said that the Energy being illumined by the self-luminous selves and becoming thereby manifested in the form of Intelligence or Phenomenal Consciousness, becomes the knowing and indiscriminating subject. This is generally maintained by the advocates of the view. They hold that it is Intelligence which fails to discriminate between the selves and the Energy; it is Intelligence again which as the result of various unpleasant and dissatisfying experiences seeks for truth, adopts suitable courses of discipline and ultimately attains discriminating knowledge, which becomes the cause of liberation. But does not such an argument involve a vicious circle? The very production of Intelligence or phenomenal consciousness is the effect of the association

between Self and Energy, and this association itself is regarded as of the nature of indiscrimination. Indiscrimination is thus a necessary pre-condition of the appearance of Intelligence. How can it be regarded as the property or function of Intelligence? How can the child be the go-between in the original union of its parents? Illumination and manifestation of the Energy presupposes its proximity to Self and this proximity implies indiscrimination; how can then the illumined and manifested Energy be conceived as the ultimate support of indiscrimination? Intelligence, in order to be regarded as the ultimate support of indiscrimination, must be conceived as the eternal perceiving subject of both Energy and Self and as such independent of and co-eternal with them. This would mean that the ultimate source and ground of the universe is a Supreme Phenomenal Consciousness. This is far from what the advocates of the theory can possibly admit.

From the foregoing discussion, it is also evident that the third alternative, viz. that the experience of indiscrimination belongs to both the conscious selves and the unconscious Energy, can not be accepted. Consistently with the theory such an experience can be ascribed to a self only when it participates in the modification of the Energy and to the Energy only when it participates in the consciousness of the self. Thus the experience of indiscrimination presupposes the conjunction or association between the two and cannot be cause of or constitute the nature of the conjunction or association.

Further, is the idea of conjunction or association or proximity or indiscrimination consistent with the conception of self and Energy. Both of them are conceived as partless supra-spatial entities. How can partless entities

be conjoined to or associated with each other without complete identification? They cannot be conceived as existing side by side, because they are without spatial properties; they cannot touch each other, because they have no tactual properties; they cannot be partially mixed up with each other, because they have no parts; they cannot be completely identified with each other, because they are essentially distinct and unique and unanalysable entities. There is no justification on our part for supposing that the nature of one is reflected on the other, because in our experience we find such reflection only in the cases of objects occupying space and possessing parts. Further, reflection can possibly occur in respect of those attributes only which one object has the capacity to project and the other has the capacity to receive and that also in a favourable collocation of circumstances. The redness of the *Jabá* flower is not reflected on rough piece of stone or earth. The crystal also does not receive the softness or the peculiar taste of the *Jabá* flower. No reflection between the crystal and the flower occurs in darkness. Hence the possibility of mutual reflection between the selves and the Energy must presuppose special properties in them for projecting and receiving particular attributes. No such special properties are admitted to exist in the selves. Without further elaborating our difficulties we may now admit our utter failure in all our attempts to form a clear and rational idea of the ultimate relation between the Energy and the selves as conceived by the exponents of the theory under consideration. Hence this conception of self also cannot be rationally adhered to.

Let us however concede to the advocates of the theory that innumerable infinite attributeless self-luminous selves are from eternity related in some inconceivable way with

one infinite unconscious self-modifying Primordial Energy. But does this supposition furnish any adequate rational explanation for the diverse experiences of the innumerable living individuals ?

It is to be remembered that all selves are essentially of the same self-luminous character and none of them has any distinguishing characteristics or specific functions. Accordingly it may first of all be questioned whether the association with or the proximity of such inactive attributeless functionless pure selves has any influence whatsoever upon the modes of the modifications or transformations of the Primordial Energy. If any active influence of the selves upon the Energy be admitted, the selves can no longer be regarded as purely self-luminous without any attributes or functions or activities. As the modifications of the Energy would not have been what they are without the positive co-operation of the selves, the selves cannot be regarded as merely indifferent disinterested inactive witnesses or illuminers of the activities and changes of the Energy. The products of the Energy should in that case be regarded as the joint effects of the selves and the Energy,—the results of the combination of the selves and the Energy. This would lead to the conclusion that the selves are either indispensable parts of the material cause of the phenomenal world or efficient causes giving special mould and form to the material cause with a view to produce the particular system of the phenomenal world. In either case the selves should be conceived as self-modifying active agencies, because without any kind of modification in themselves they cannot be thought of as performing the function either of a material cause or of an efficient cause. But the theory denies all kinds of modification of the selves and hence all kinds of causality of them. Nevertheless it is

held that without association with them (i. e. without their co-operation) the transformations of the Energy into manifested world are not possible. It is asserted that by their mere illumining presence they exert an influence upon the Energy and the course of its transformations. This would appear to an ordinary unbiassed man of commonsense as the affirmation and denial of causality of the selves at the same breath.

Even assuming that the selves by their mere unmodified inactive self-conscious presence exert a causal or creative influence upon the course of the modification of the ultimate material cause, the Primordial Energy, we are faced with further difficulties. It is admitted that all selves are ultimately of the same character. Accordingly the influence exerted upon the Energy by the presence of any one self must reasonably be expected to be exactly the same in quality as well as quantity as that exerted upon it by the presence of any other self. All the selves being regarded as infinite and inactive and self-luminous, the influence of the plurality of selves upon the Energy cannot be expected to be either qualitatively or quantitatively different from that of a single self. If the presence of some changeless self-luminous entity be regarded as necessary for the transformation of the Energy from the unmanifested to the manifested states and for the order and harmony in the course of the manifested world, the recognition of the existence of one such self is sufficient. What is the necessity for supposing the existence of a countless plurality of selves? If without logically demonstrated necessity many selves be supposed to exist instead of one, it is a gross violation of the Law of Parsimony. But no such necessity is demonstrated, and even no definite help is obtained from the supposition of the plurality

of selves for explaining the divergent individualities of living beings and their diverse kinds of experiences.

The self and the Energy being both infinite and partless, it cannot be maintained that different selves are associated with different parts of the Energy and give birth to different intelligences and egos and psycho-physical organisms. Each self must be associated with and cause transformation in the entire Energy, and no unmanifested part of the Energy can be left behind. Hence if the plurality of intelligences, egos, etc., are evolved from one Energy, it must be the inherent nature of that Energy to transform itself into these diversities, and the plurality of selves can be no help in accounting for them. The transformations which cannot occur as the result of the association of the Energy with one self cannot possibly occur as the result of its association with the plurality of selves. Further, we experience the existence of diverse orders of individual living beings, with the powers of intelligence, ego, mind, senses, and physical body variously developed and undeveloped and with various kinds of activities, knowledges and enjoyments and sufferings. Every particular living being has a particularly constituted physical organism, a particular group of active and cognitive senses, a particular mind and ego and intelligence. The cognitions and feelings and actions of each individual differ from those of every other individual. How can all these varieties and differences be accounted for by reference to the plurality of selves? Each of the selves of identical nature is from eternity associated with the same identical Energy. How can particular selves be specially related (even though apparently) to particular intelligences and egos and psycho-physical organisms? How can the limitations and changes and enjoyments and sufferings of particular

beings be attributed to particular selves to the exclusion of all others? How can the births and growths and decays and deaths, the happinesses and miseries and stupors, the errors and ignorances and truth-realisations, etc., of particular worldly individuals be in any way referred to particular transcendent selves? All these belong to the modifications of the Energy, to which all the selves are in the same way related. On what principle and by whose agency can the particular modifications with their particular characteristics be distributed among the different changeless attributeless selves? Why should some selves be suffering from bondage and some attain liberation as results of the particular modifications of the same Energy? They themselves cannot be held responsible for these differences, because they are by nature inactive and indifferent and purely self-luminous. If the Energy be responsible for them, it must be charged with gross injustice. The appeal to the Law of *karma* would be of no avail, because the pure selves are not responsible for any *karma* and can have no merit or demerit, virtue or vice. Moreover, *karma* presupposes individuality of living beings, and this individuality takes for granted the relation of particular intelligences, egos, etc. to particular selves. Thus the assumption of the existence of the plurality of selves can in no way help any rational explanation for the individualities and divergences in the world of living beings.

It may be argued that it is the analysis of the consciousness of 'I' or Ego which ultimately leads us to the conception of the changeless attributeless self-luminous self; this 'I' of every individual is distinguished from that of every other individual; hence there must be a distinct self behind each of these *I's*. Now, if we base our recognition

of the plurality of selves on the strength of this argument, then we may likewise argue that since the 'I' of each individual has its distinguishing characteristics differentiating it from that of every other individual, each self also must have in its essential character some distinguishing characteristics for differentiating it from every other self. In that case the selves can not be regarded as changeless attributeless self-luminous simple entities. Each distinct self must then be essentially endowed with one or more distinct qualities, and as such must be subject to modification. The admission of such distinguishing characteristics and distinct courses of modification in the nature of the selves cannot of course serve the purposes of the exponents of this theory.

Moreover, if the self, which is ultimately referred to by an individual 'I' is in no way affected or modified by the modifications and experiences, the developments and degradations, the enjoyments and sufferings of this 'I', what is the significance of this reference to it, what is the meaning in saying that a particular 'I' has a particular self behind it ? If there is no actual conscious relation between the self and the 'I', if the self in its essential character is in no way interested in whatever happens to 'I', is it not meaningless to assert that every individual 'I', implies an individual self (though the latter has no consciousness of individuality). ?

It may be contended by the exponents of the theory that the 'I' being the phenomenal self of an individual cannot be self-existent and must rationally imply the existence of a noumenal self, which alone can exist by itself. This contention can be accepted as valid, only on condition that there is a rational passage for descending to the phenomenon from the noumenon, that a logical

means can be found out for deducing the phenomenal self and its modifications from the nature of the noumenal self, that the noumenal self as conceived can furnish an adequate explanation for the course of evolution of the phenomenal self. But we have found that this test is not satisfied by the noumenal self as conceived by the advocates of this theory. Moreover, the exponents of the theory do not in every case feel the necessity for recognising a noumenal being as the ultimate substance of a phenomenal being. The Primordial Energy, which is the ultimate material cause of all phenomenal existences, is itself even in its unmanifested state a phenomenal being, since it is conceived as the equilibrium of the three *gunas*, viz. *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Even in its unmanifested state, some sort of subtle modification is said to continue within its nature. This Energy, inspite of its phenomenal character, is regarded as self-existent, and no absolutely changeless noumenal being is supposed to exist as the ultimate substance of this Energy. Accordingly, the mere fact that the 'I' which each individual experiences is of a phenomenal nature cannot be accepted as a sufficient proof of the existence of a plurality of noumenal selves, unless the latter can be demonstrated to be necessary for and capable of adequately explaining the plurality of phenomenal selves and their experiences and destinies. But such demonstration is unavailable.

The advocates of the theory may ultimately rely on the spiritual experience of the perfect sorrowless unconcerned state of the consciousness for proving that this represents the true nature of the self. But can this experience demonstrate the metaphysical changeless character of the self as dissociated from the Energy? Every experience is a particular modification of the

phenomenal consciousness. If this consciousness, by means of systematic self-discipline, divests itself of the thoughts about all objects, which diversify it and produce changes in its ideas, feelings and activities, and concentrates its attention upon itself as pure consciousness free from all such diversities of experiences, it may temporarily experience a perfectly self-centred sorrowless changeless peaceful state. This state of trance (*samádhi*) is as good as a phenomenal state of the consciousness as any other state. It is a particular form of the modification of the individual phenomenal consciousness—a serene and tranquil, joyless and sorrowless, undiversified and unobjectified flow of consciousness. This may be the most desirable state. This state may rightly be regarded as a state of emancipation from sorrow and bondage. Through the strenuous and continuous practice of concentration, an individual may possibly retain this blessed state of consciousness till the last moment of his life. But still it is a phenomenal state of the individual's consciousness and it does not prove the noumenal nature of the self. This state of consciousness, however calm and peaceful, however apparently changeless and sorrowless, however apparently self-centred and devoid of subject-object relation, is admittedly not dissociated from the Energy and its subtle modifications. There is even no certainty that this state once attained continues for ever. According to the principle of evolution and involution admitted in this theory, diversified experience is evolved out of unitary experience and is resolved into unitary experience, and this may occur repeatedly. If once the diversities of experiences can be evolved out of pure non-individuated phenomenal consciousness, as this system asserts, they can obviously be evolved in the same way from

the non-individuated restful state of the phenomenal consciousness which may be attained through the practice of spiritual self-discipline and self-concentration.

Even if such a permanent state of consciousness is attainable, and if it be admitted to continue even in the disembodied existence, that also would not prove it to represent the unassociated self-luminous character of the self. It would only indicate the highest ideal state of the phenomenal consciousness. The highest moral and spiritual ideal of human life is not necessarily the ultimate metaphysical reality. The attainment of the ideal may give the subjective consciousness of self-fulfilment to the phenomenal ego and liberate it from the sorrows and limitations which it experiences in the normal worldly life. It is the product of specific forms of discipline and meditation. The possibility of the attainment of such an ideal does not necessarily prove that this ideal is the ultimate eternal character of noumenal self.

It may be said in reply that the highest spiritual experience does not consist in a particular form of modification of the phenomenal consciousness arising from a particular type of discipline and meditation, but that it consists in the direct intuition of truth about the self. But how can the so-called direct intuition of truth be distinguished from a dogmatic assertion or psychical hallucination ? It is only by putting it to rational tests that any object of individual experience can be accepted as real truth. What is intuited as the ultimate nature of the noumenal self must, in order to be accepted as the truth, show itself to be the exclusively adequate ground for the explanation of the phenomena of normal experience. Hence we must rely on philosophical reasoning for determining the truth and cannot take intuition in its face

value. Intuition, however deep and sincere, is subjective. Whether it amounts to objective knowledge cannot be ascertained without critical examination. We have found that the nature of the self, as claimed to be intuited by the recognised self-realised saints of this school, cannot be substantiated rationally by reference to the phenomena it seeks to explain. How can it then be accepted as the truth ?

In this connection we may also note that intuition obtained in the state of trance, like every other form of experience in every other state, belongs to intelligence or phenomenal consciousness. Can intelligence make either the self or the Energy the object of its experience or knowledge ? Experience or knowledge is, according to this theory, a product of the evolution of the Energy associated with and indiscriminated from the self. So long as knowledge or experience or intuition or whatever it may be called continues to exist, indiscrimination between the Energy and the self must be supposed to be present. Hence the knowledge of the self as discriminated from the Energy or the knowledge of the Energy as discriminated from the self appears to be impossible. Accordingly the conception of the self as a pure changeless self-luminous entity dissociated from the Energy is unwarranted either by experience or by logic.

Moreover, even if some sort of discriminating knowledge is attainable by intelligence and somehow a conception of self as distinct from the Energy is formed by it, this cannot be supposed to be of any help in liberating any of the plurality of selves from association with the Energy. Intelligence being the product of indiscrimination between self and Energy, the indiscrimination and association between them and the apparent bondage of the self cannot

be regarded as originated from or sustained by the want of discriminating knowledge on the part of intelligence, and the attainment of discriminating knowledge by intelligence cannot be the cause of the destruction of the original indiscrimination and association and the liberation of the self from bondage. If again this liberation be possible, all selves ought to be liberated thereby, because the intelligence attains the knowledge of the distinctness of self as such from the Energy and not of any particular self. It cannot be said that the particular self related to the particular enlightened intelligence is alone liberated, because no particular self is really related to any particular intelligence, and if any relation exists, all selves being infinite must be regarded as related to every intelligence. Thus the regulation of bondage and liberation cannot be explained by this conception of many selves.

We may raise another question also in this connection. Association with self is regarded as the pre-condition of the manifestation of the Energy, and this manifestation consists not only in the evolution of experiencing subjects, but also in the evolution of the material objects of experience. The material world of diverse objects is regarded not as having only subjective reality for the particular experiencing individuals, but as having objective reality independent of particular subjects. Now the question is, is the production of this material world due to the association of the Energy with any individual self or with the aggregate of all these selves? Evidently it cannot be due to the association of any particular self, because in that case either this self is to be regarded as a Supreme Self distinguished essentially from all other selves and incapable of being dissociated from the Energy, or the world should be destroyed with the liberation of this self. Both those alternatives are inadmissible

in accordance with this theory. The world cannot be regarded as the product of the association of the Energy with the aggregate of all the selves, because the selves which are in their ultimate character unrelated to one another cannot form any aggregate and cannot exercise any combined influence upon the course of the evolution of the Energy. If the association with each self independently gives rise to a course of evolution, there should be a distinct world for each individual self and the world would have no objective reality for all experiencing subjects. How then can the objective reality of the world be explained by reference to the plurality of noumenal selves ?

Moreover, the Energy associated with the selves evolves out of itself the intelligence, the ego, the mind and the senses, as well as the essences of material objects and the gross material objects. Consequently, if each ego involves reference to a distinct self, each of the senses also ought to refer to a distinct self and each of the material objects also, subtle or gross, ought to indicate the presence of a distinct self-luminous self. In that case, each of the material objects also is to be expected to attain liberation in course of time. Various absurdities of this kind arise from any rational attempt at the examination of the implications of this theory. This conception of the self is accordingly found to be unsatisfactory from the philosophical view-point.

VII. Self conceived as one infinite eternal self-luminous attributeless absolute consciousness.

A. Exposition :—

There is one widely accepted view, according to which all living beings of this beginningless and endless universe

are enlivened and illumined and sustained by only one non-dual infinite Self, Which is no other than the Source and Substance of the entire phenomenal universe and Which in Its ultimate metaphysical character is a changeless attributeless self-luminous absolute Consciousness. The philosophical doctrine from which this view about the self logically follows has previously been expounded and examined in details. It will be enough to give here a brief outline of the doctrine so far as it has bearing on the present topic and to indicate how this conclusion with regard to the ultimate character of the self follows from it.

Experience is the fundamental fact upon which any philosophical doctrine must be based. By analysis of and reflection upon our experience, it is found that experience invariably involves a relation between a subject and an object, a knower and a knowable, a conscious entity and something illumined by the consciousness. These factors are so essentially related to each other that either of them cannot be conceived without reference to the other, and for the same reason either of them cannot to reduced to or deduced from the other. In actual experience the subjects appear as modified by their contact with the objects, and the objects appear as received and interpreted by the experiencing subjects. The ultimate nature of the subjects and the ultimate nature of the objects, as uninfluenced by their relation to each other, remain unknown in actual experience and become the subject-matter of philosophical speculation.

Each experiencing subject experiences itself as being affected and modified by its experiences, and each experience takes place in the form of a modification of the subject. Accordingly the subject as it is manifested in its experiences is a modifiable entity and must therefore be regarded as

having a phenomenal character. Every object of the world of experience is actually found to be liable to modification and hence of the nature of a phenomenon. Thus all our experiences—all our knowledge, feeling and will and action —is confined within the domain of phenomenal realities. Every experience lies within the phenomenal consciousness in relation to phenomenal objects.

Since the objects of valid knowledge—the objects known through valid perception, valid inference etc.—are the same for all individual subjects, and since the objects can be successfully made use of in pursuance of the ideas formed about them through such processes of knowledge, they must be differentiated from objects experienced in dreams or hallucinations or errors, and must accordingly be regarded not as merely subjective ideas, but as having objective phenomenal existence. But all such objects being of a *produced* nature, i. e. of the nature of effects, must have their causes. The unity and uniformity, the order and harmony, the process of systematic evolution and involution, in this objective world implies that all these diverse objects must have ultimately a common source. The analysis of the nature of causal relation reveals that the effect is nothing but the cause transformed, i. e. the cause appearing in a particular form, and hence the effect is essentially non-different from its cause. The real substance of every effect should accordingly be sought in its cause. As the result of a systematic philosophical search, in accordance with these principles, for the ultimate material cause of the diverse orders of phenomenal realities constituting the objective world, the conclusion is arrived at that this boundless world of effects must be the product of the modification and transformation of one infinite and eternal Cosmic Power,—a Power which cannot be resolved into or derived from any

other material cause, a Power which is the cause of all and the product of none.

Since the living bodies, the senses, and the minds also are of phenomenal characters, since they act and react with the phenomenal objects of the physical world, since they are modified by and exert modifying influence upon the objects with which they are related, and since their very existence is felt in relation to the objects of experience, they also must be regarded as forming parts of the phenomenal universe and as of the nature of effects. Accordingly they also must be recognised as the products of the transformation of the same ultimate Cosmic Power. Thus the origin of the entire phenomenal universe, mental as well as material, is traced to the Cosmic Power, which is the Potentiality of all phenomena. According to the principle of the essential non-difference of the effects from their material cause, this phenomenal universe must therefore be conceived as non-different from the Cosmic Power, of which it is the modification and diversified manifestation.

Here two questions arise, one epistemological and another ontological. First, all our knowledge or experience has been found to be of the nature of subjective or mental modification or modification of phenomenal consciousness; is such knowledge or experience possible without a changeless unmodified self-luminous subject witnessing, illumining and unifying these modifications? In the absence of such a changeless subject, the modifications should mean only an unconnected series of distinct subjective states; each particular state should die out as soon as it is succeeded by another state; no state can be expected to have direct experience of the preceding or the succeeding states; how can in these circumstances any systematic knowledge be accounted for? Knowledge demands the

integration, unification and interpretation of a series of successive mental modifications. Though the resultant knowledge also is of the nature of a mental modification, a unifying agency is necessary to witness the successive modifications and to unify them into one complex modified state, constituting complete knowledge. Even perceptual knowledge cannot be accounted for without the recognition of such a unifying conscious subject. The necessity for such a subject is felt all the more strongly in cases of inferential knowledge. When we consider the nature of remembrance, the recognition of such a subject becomes inevitable. An individual can remember the objects and events and mental affections experienced long long ago. How can it be possible, unless one identical unchanged subject exists throughout the time? How can there be adaptation of knowledge with action, of actions with their fruits, of means with ends, of past experiences with future aspirations, in the absence of such a subject, which remains the same in the midst of and as the witness of all these changes? Thus the possibility of phenomenal experiences demands the recognition of the existence of a noumenal subject. There must be one changeless subject to witness and link together the series of changing subjective states; there must be a noumenal witness-consciousness to illumine and reveal the phenomenal modified consciousness; there must be an unmodifiable unchangeable permanent self-luminous self at the background of the phenomenal self or ego or 'I' which is always experiencing changes and modifications within itself in relation to the objective phenomenal world. Otherwise all experience would be unaccountable.

Now, here in order to account for experience, a distinction is necessarily made between a noumenal self and a phenomenal self, between a changeless self-luminous

consciousness and a changing illumined consciousness, between an unmodified witness-subject and a series of subjective or mental modifications, or in popular language between a spirit (*ātman*) and a mind (*manas*). But is it not possible that the same self is modified into a series of subjective states and processes and at the same time remains unchanged and illumines and witnesses and unifies its own modifications? Is it not conceivable that it is self-modifying as well as self-identical,—manifesting itself in the connected plurality of subjective experiences, as well as retaining its identity in the midst of these changes and linking together these changes by means of its unaffected luminous unitary character? The answer must be in the negative. An affirmative answer would imply either that the self is changing and changeless at the same time or that it is partly changing and partly changeless. The first alternative is barred by the Law of Contradiction. The second alternative would make the self a composite body with distinct parts of different characters, one noumenal and another phenomenal. Since the two parts cannot be identical, the distinction between the noumenal self and the phenomenal self remains, and it is not rational to speak of them as two parts of the same composite self. The irrationality cannot be avoided by using the term 'aspects' instead of 'parts.' Thus the existence of a noumenal self above the phenomenal self must be recognised.

But some sort of relation between the noumenal self and the phenomenal consciousness must be admitted. It has been found that the recognition of the existence of the noumenal self is indispensably necessary, because the facts of the phenomenal consciousness are inexplicable except by reference to such a self. The phenomenal consciousness, in order to be rationally explained, must be related to the

noumenal Self. Again, the noumenal Self has no self-expression except in and through the phenomenal consciousness. Therefore the nature of the relation between the two has to be ascertained. Evidently it cannot be a relation of *conjunction*, because they are not two separately existent substances of the same order, coming in contact with each other. There cannot be any temporal or spatial relation between the two, because the noumenal Self is above space and time, and the phenomenal consciousness also, though being modified in time, does not occupy space. There may be a relation of succession and even of simultaneity among the modifications of phenomenal consciousness; but the changeless eternal noumenal Self cannot be conceived as either being preceded or succeeded by the phenomenal consciousness or occurring simultaneously with it. Nor can we conceive any real causal relation between the two, because a real causal relation implies a modification of the cause into the effect and therefore the phenomenal nature of both the cause and the effect. Nor can we regard the one as a substance and the other as an attribute inherent in it, because in that case either the modification of the attribute would imply the modification of the substance, or otherwise the attribute would have to be conceived as having a separate existence and its relation to the substance would remain inexplicable. Obviously the relation between the two cannot be one between the whole and its part, because the noumenal Self cannot be regarded as a composite body and the facts of the phenomenal consciousness as its constituent parts.

What then can be the possible relation between the two? As the possibility of any of the recognised real relations is eliminated, the relation must be conceived as an *apparent* relation. The noumenal Self is to be conceived

as *reflected* on the phenomenal consciousness. Without being in any way changed or modified, without having its essential nature in any way affected, the self-luminous noumenal Self is *reflected* on the changing phenomenal consciousness, illumines it and endows it with a power of illumination according to its purity and transparency, witnesses its modifications and acts as the principle of unity among them, and thus makes knowledge and remembrance, action and adaptation, enjoyments and sufferings in accordance with virtue and vice, etc., possible within the domain of phenomenal consciousness. In consequence of this *reflection* of the noumenal Self or the spirit upon the phenomenal consciousness or the mind, the luminous and unitary character of the former is apparently transmitted to the latter, and the idea of a knowing, feeling and acting subject or ego, retaining its self-same individuality and remaining identical in course of all its changes of states and objects, reigns in the mind. On the other hand, the changes, the limitations and the impurities of the phenomenal consciousness, related to the diverse kinds of objects, are attributed to the reflected self, which therefore appears to be subject to modifications, limitations, impurities, bondages and sorrows. From the phenomenal stand-point it may be reasonably asserted that it is the *reflected self* which is the knowing, feeling and acting subject, and the mind, the modifications of which its knowledge, feeling and action consist in, is its faculty or instrument for knowing, feeling and acting.

Thus the analysis and the rational study of the nature of our experience lead us necessarily to the conceptions of the noumenal self as the true Self, the reflected self as the self manifested in phenomenal experience, and the mind as the faculty of experience.

Now, the most important question pertaining to this view arises. Is the noumenal Self the same identical one for all individuals or a distinct one for each individual? Are we ultimately to recognise the existence of a single non-dual self in the universe, or a numberless plurality of selves? It is evident that the consciousness of individuality pertains to the phenomenal consciousness. All notions of distinction and difference make their appearance in the domain of the modifications of consciousness. Accordingly, for the adequate explanation of the consciousness of individuality in the different individuals and the actually experienced differences in their cognitions and volitions, powers and propensities, enjoyments and sufferings, births and deaths, bondages and liberations, etc., the distinctions among the individual *minds* must be admitted. These minds being the faculties or instruments, the *reflected selves*, which are the subjects or agents in this phenomenal universe, must also be necessarily recognised as many. Individuality must be attributed to the *reflected self* related to each individual mind, illumining its modifications and owning them as its own. Now the question is, are the reflected selves the reflections of the same universal noumenal Self on the plurality of phenomenal consciousnesses, deriving individualities from connection with the individual minds, or are they the reflections of ultimately distinct individual noumenal selves, and the originators of individualities in the phenomenal consciousness?

A final solution of this problem requires the solution of the ontological problem alluded to before. The demand for the causal explanation of all the related subjective and objective phenomena of experience leads our reason to one infinite simple and homogeneous Cosmic

Power as their ultimate material cause. All complex and heterogeneous phenomena of experience are found to be resolvable into and deducible from more and more simple and homogeneous causes; all correlated phenomena are found to have common sources; all effects are found to be modifications of their material causes and these causes are found accordingly to be modifiable entities; and lastly, the effects are found to be substantially non-different from their material causes, though different from these in names and forms. Proceeding in search for the ultimate material cause of the phenomenal world in accordance with these fundamental principles, it is inferred that this beginningless and endless related system of various orders of complex and heterogeneous phenomena must have as its ultimate material cause one absolute simple and homogeneous phenomenal Entity, which is incapable of being further simplified and analysed, which is undivided and undifferentiated into any particularised names and forms, but which is capable of being modified into an infinite plurality of names and forms. Such an ultimate phenomenal Entity may be called the Cosmic Power, from which the whole complex differentiated phenomenal universe has been originated (not at any particular period of time, but eternally,) and from which this universe is substantially non-different. The phenomenal consciousness, or the mind in a general sense, (which is not self-luminous, but illumined and endowed with the power of illumining objects by the self-luminous noumenal Self, as explained before) is also a modification of this Cosmic Power, in as much as it is correlative with and the subjective counterpart of the objective world. The mutually related subjective and objective worlds must be reduced to and deduced from the same material cause and must be essentially non-different from it.

Now, the question is, can this Cosmic Power be regarded as the self-existent self-dependent self-luminous self-revealing absolute Reality, which our reason demands for the ontological explanation of the phenomenal world? Evidently it cannot. The phenomenal modifiable nature of this Power implies that its existence must be dependent upon the existence of some unmodifiable noumenal Reality, that the unity in and throughout its modifications in time must be witnessed and revealed and sustained by some changeless self-luminous Reality above time. The Power accordingly must pertain to one self-existent self-luminous changeless absolute Substance, which is distinguishable from it, but from which it cannot be separated. It must be conceived as existing eternally for and by that Substance, though its modifications into the plurality of names and forms should be thought of as not in any way affecting the changeless self-luminous pure transcendent nature of that Substance.

This being the logical position, what can be the rational relation between the Absolute self-luminous Substance and the phenomenal Cosmic Power? Since the Cosmic Power has no existence apart from and independent of the Absolute Substance, it cannot be regarded as a second reality by the side of and conjoined with this Substance. It cannot however be regarded as altogether unreal or non-existent, because in that case there would be no causal explanation of the experience of plurality. Hence the Cosmic Power must be regarded as a positive entity, which is neither existent nor non-existent, neither real nor unreal, which is therefore inexplicable. This inexplicable entity being the sole material cause of the phenomenal world, it must be admitted that there is ultimately only one real Substance, and that there is no other real substance which

can be regarded as a second to it and as constituting its limit and making it finite. The Absolute Substance is therefore non-dual,—one without a second.

Since this Absolute Substance cannot, consistently with what has been previously established with regard to its nature, be conceived as really modifying itself into the Cosmic Power or any other effect, it cannot be regarded as the real cause of any effect. But this Absolute Substance being the only self-existent Reality, the origin and manifestation of the phenomenal world of undeniable experience and of the Cosmic Power of which it is the modified form, must necessarily be traced to this Reality. How then can we conceive the nature of the origination and manifestation of the phenomenal universe, consistently with the changeless self-luminous character of the Absolute Substance ? It must be regarded as of the nature of illusory appearance. This means that the One Absolute Substance, without being in the least changed or modified or affected in its real non-dual self-luminous transcendent nature, manifests itself illusorily as the neither-real-nor-unreal world of the plurality of subjective and objective phenomena in time. Accordingly, the Cosmic Power, which is regarded as the sole material cause of this world, must be conceived as nothing but the Power of Illusory creation, i. e. the power of illusorily manifesting the Substance in diverse orders of names and forms without in any way affecting the true nature of the Substance. This Power may from this point of view be aptly described as Ignorance, the nature of which is to veil the true nature of the one real changeless self-luminous Substance and exhibit it illusorily in the forms of a variety of phenomenal existences,—a plurality of phenomenal subjects and objects. Accordingly Ignorance as well as its

products—the plurality of subjects and objects—are really non-different from the Absolute Substance, though they appear in diverse modified forms.

Let us with this conception of the ultimate Reality return to the question about the unity or plurality of noumenal Self, which is the subject-matter of the present inquiry. It is shown that according to this metaphysical theory one changeless unrelated infinite eternal absolute self-luminous Substance (which may be named Impersonal God) is the only noumenal Reality. Consistently with this theory, we cannot think of the existence of a plurality of noumenal selves. The noumenal Self, the recognition of which has been found to be necessary for the possibility of knowledge, remembrance and other forms of experience of every individual, must, in the light of this metaphysical truth, be regarded as identical with this one non-dual Impersonal God. The inexplicable Cosmic Ignorance, which veils the true character of this Impersonal God and illusorily makes Him appear as diverse orders of phenomenal existences, is accordingly to be regarded as the material cause of the plurality of phenomenal consciousnesses or individual subjects, and each of these finite changing phenomenal consciousnesses is to be regarded as sustained and witnessed and illumined and unified by the same non-dual self-luminous noumenal Impersonal God. It is the same noumenal Impersonal God that is reflected upon each of the plurality of phenomenal consciousnesses and makes distinctive knowledge, etc. in individual cases possible. The reflected selves are the reflections of the same non-dual absolute self-luminous Reality and are phenomenal or illusory realities like all other objects of phenomenal experience. The Impersonal God is the Self of all selves—the Universal Self.

The individual reflected selves also, which are phenomenal and as such illusory in character, are neither different nor non-different from the non-dual Impersonal God and are neither really existent nor absolutely non-existent. Their nature and existence are logically inexplicable. The really existent Self of all phenomenal individuals is the One Impersonal God. The reflected selves may be described as so many phenomenal centres of experience, from which God apparently experiences Himself as the plurality of phenomenal realities through the veil of Ignorance, and in relation to which God Himself appears as the efficient and material cause of all—the creator and sustainer of the universe. Thus with regard to the nature of Self, the conclusion of the theory is that the true self of all is one and non-dual, infinite and eternal, changeless and attributeless, self-existent and self-luminous, subject-object-less Absolute Consciousness. It is the Self of all phenomenal selves and the Reality of all phenomenal realities.

When any reflected self related to a phenomenal consciousness experiences its perfect identity with the one non-dual Impersonal God, it realises itself as free from all bondage and sorrow, from all changes and limitations, from all relativity and conditionality, from all knowledge and feeling and action. So long as apparent phenomenal individuality continues after this truth-realisation, there is the consciousness of the unity of the individual with the universe, the consciousness of the identity of all in God, and the consciousness of the enjoyment of perfect bliss in the entire existence. But since such consciousness also is phenomenal, when it is transcended, there is only pure consciousness, in which there must be the cessation of all experience and enjoyment.

B. Criticism :—

This theory, as a metaphysical doctrine, has already been subjected to critical examination in connection with the discussion of the nature of God. Here we are only to examine whether its conception of self can be logically maintained.

Like the theories discussed just before it, this theory also bases its conception of noumenal Self on the assumption that phenomenal consciousness cannot be regarded as self-existent and self-luminous, and that it logically presupposes the presence of some self-existent and self-luminous, supra-temporal and supra-spatial, unchanging and unmodifiable noumenal entity. The fundamental difference between the conclusions of this theory and the one examined just before it lies in the fact that according to the preceding view the phenomenal consciousness is a modification of one *Cosmic Energy*, which is *self-existent* but *not self-luminous*, and which depends for its illumined particularised manifestations into diverse orders of *realities* on some sort of uncaused association with a *plurality* of self-existent and self-luminous noumenal selves essentially distinct from itself and its modifications, while according to the present view the phenomenal consciousness is a modification of one *Cosmic Ignorance*, which is *neither self-existent nor self-luminous*, and which depends for its existence *as well as* its illumined particularised manifestations into diverse orders of *illusory appearances* upon the existence and luminosity of *one* self-existent and self-luminous noumenal Self, from which this Ignorance and its modifications are *essentially non-different*, but *apparently different*. According to the former, each individual phenomenal ego is illuminated and manifested by a particular self, existentially different from,

though characteristically identical with, all others; according to the latter, all individual phenomenal egos owe their luminosity, manifestation as well as existence to the same one non-dual universal Self. According to the former, each of the distinct noumenal selves is an eternal infinite, changeless, attributeless, self-existent and self-luminous entity; according to the latter, there is ultimately only one non-dual eternal, infinite, changeless, attributeless, self-existent and self-luminous entity, which is the true Self of all. Further, according to the former, the phenomenal and the noumenal realities are equally real, though the one is modifiable and the other absolutely changeless ; according to the latter, the phenomenal realities are only illusory manifestations of the noumenal Reality.

However, the difficulties in the way of furnishing adequate rational explanation for phenomena of experience with the help of the supposed noumenal Self are no less present in this present theory than in the former. It has been found that in the preceding theory no rational account can be offered and consistently maintained for the relation between the self-existent, self-luminous, changeless and attributeless noumenal selves and the self-existent, non-self-luminous and changing Cosmic Energy, and that no satisfactory rational explanation for the individual experiences is available by reference to the supposed association between them. In the present case also the logical difficulties are not removed.

The present theory seeks to explain the individual experiences by having recourse to the doctrine of *reflection*. But what is the source of this idea of reflection ? In our experience we find objects like the sun and the moon and the stars reflected on such other objects as sheets of

water, pieces of glass, polished metals, and so on. The same sun is reflected on innumerable pools of water and thereby appears as innumerable in relation to them. The same light being reflected on glasses of different colours appears as many lights of different colours. The same face reflected on different pieces of glass of various degrees of concavity and convexity appears as different faces of different forms. So on and so forth. Such examples are cited to show how the one changeless noumenal Self is reflected upon various changing phenomenal consciousnesses and appears as many selves of different changing characters. But are we justified is drawing any analogy between the observed cases of reflection and the relation between the Noumenal Self and the phenomenal consciousnesses? So far as experience goes, reflection occurs in cases of bodies having forms and occupying space. When the sky is found to be reflected on water, it is not the infinite colourless ether that is observed to be reflected, but it is the blue vault of the sky, as we actually see it, that is reflected. Even in our thought we cannot form any definite conception of a formless supra-spatial infinite entity being reflected on another spatial or supra-spatial entity.

Most advocates of this theory, however, admit that the reference to the idea of reflection is made here only in a figurative way to indicate how one entity may appear to become many in number and to participate in the characters of some other entities without being itself really affected in the least through the connection with those entities. The nature of the relation on account of which this can happen remains therefore according to their own admission unascertained and inexplicable. It is held that the unity, luminosity, reality, etc. which pertain to the nature of the

noumenal Self are attributed to the phenomenal consciousness, which is a modification of the Cosmic Ignorance, and that the limitations, relations, changes, experiences, etc., which pertain to the nature of the phenomenal consciousness, are attributed to the noumenal Self, which is in truth infinite, unrelated, changeless and experienceless. It has to be admitted that such a relation between the noumenal Self and the phenomenal consciousness cannot be logically demonstrated on the strength of any relation which we actually observe within the domain of our experience, because all the relations which we can possibly observe are between phenomenal objects of the phenomenal consciousness and none of these relations can bear comparison in essential respects with the relation between the phenomenal consciousness and that which is above and behind it. Hence this relation is regarded as logically indefinable. The observation of reflection within the field of our experience may only to some extent point to the way in which we may form a conception of this relation.

Now, we find that this idea of reflection is resorted to by the advocates of this theory and as well as those of the preceding theory,—by the supporters of the non-duality of the noumenal Self and the illusoriness of the phenomenal consciousness as well as the supporters of the plurality of noumenal selves and the reality of phenomenal consciousness. We have found in the case of the preceding theory that this conception of the mutual transference of characteristics without in any way affecting the real nature of the distinct independent entities concerned cannot be logically maintained. The difficulties are in no way removed by the present theory.

It is to be noted first that if the real existence and the true nature of the one non-dual changeless attributeless noumenal Self as well as the apparent existence and the essential character of the plurality of phenomenal consciousnesses had been independently ascertained, and if it had been demonstrated to the satisfaction of our reason that the one noumenal Self appears as many selves of different characters due to its relation with the many phenomenal consciousnesses without its true nature being in any way affected by this relation, and that the phenomenal consciousnesses are sustained, manifested, regulated, illumined and unified by the same noumenal Self, then only there would have been the logical necessity for determining the nature of the relation between them. If in that case the relation were found to be inexplicable in terms of any of the relations with which we are acquainted within the domain of our phenomenal experience, we would have been rationally compelled to suppose a new kind of relation in order to account for the facts arising out of that relation and we might figuratively indicate the nature of the relation by the name '*reflection*' or by some other name. But such a necessity has not been proved, because the absolute non-duality, changelessness, attributelessness and infinity of the self-existent and self-luminous Self have not been independently ascertained without reference to what is supposed to be the nature of the phenomenal consciousness, nor has it been rationally demonstrated that the true Self and noumenal Reality cannot possibly be a self-existent, self-conscious, self-determining, self-modifying Personality with a similarly supposed inexplicable power of retaining His identity in the midst of self-determined changes and modifications, retaining His infinity in the midst of self-imposed limitations and particularisations, and witnessing, supporting and regulating all the diversified manifestations. The noumenal

Self and the phenomenal consciousness, as they are conceived in this theory, being themselves hypothetical, and the existence and the nature of each being proved by reference to the other, the recognition of their relation as of an inexplicable character cannot be regarded as a matter of rational necessity.

According to the present theory, the one changeless attributeless infinite noumenal Self being regarded as the only real Substance, is supposed to be immanent in all the phenomenal consciousnesses as well as in all their phenomenal objects. The one changeless noumenal Self, viewed in relation to the particular phenomenal consciousnesses in which it is immanent, appears to be particularised and conditioned, and consequently appears as many distinct individual selves, participating in the modifications and characters of the particular consciousnesses. This is also the inner significance of the idea of reflection. The supposition of such a noumenal Self related in such a way with the phenomenal consciousnesses is regarded as necessitated by the demand for rational explanation of the phenomena of experience. But can this supposition offer satisfactory explanation for the phenomena in question?

Every case of knowledge, when analysed, indicates that the impressions of past experiences are retained and reproduced in the present. This is necessary not only in remembrance and inferential knowledge, but even in perceptual knowledge. Now, are these impressions retained in and reproduced by the phenomenal mind or by the non-dual noumenal Self? If the phenomenal mind is sufficient for the purpose, what is the necessity for assuming the existence of a noumenal Self behind and above it? It would mean that the phenomenal mind itself retains its

identity together with the impressions of its past experiences within itself in course of its modifications. The mind may pass through various states, various transformations, various forms of knowledge, feeling, desire and action. The impressions of all these are conserved in subtle forms in the sub-conscious layer of the mind. When suitable occasions arise, these impressions are roused from their unmanifested conditions and are reproduced in the plane of distinct consciousness. But in courses of all these changes the mind remains identical with itself, and it is on account of this identity that the varying states and modifications, the various kinds of knowledge, feeling, desire and activity, the various experiences and their remembrances, are recognised as belonging to the same individual. The mind is, according to this view, a self-luminous self-existent phenomenal substance, the very nature of which is identity through changes. If this view is accepted, then there is no epistemological necessity for the recognition of the existence of a changeless self-luminous noumenal Self. The individual phenomenal minds may be regarded as the true selves, their phenomenal nature being not considered incompatible with their self-existence and self-luminosity. We have noticed in the exposition of the theory under consideration that this view is unacceptable to its exponents. What is experienced as of a phenomenal or changing character cannot, according to this theory, be conceived as by itself identical through the changes and cannot be self-existent and self-luminous. What is an object of experience cannot by itself be the subject. A self-existent self-luminous changeless subject is considered to be rationally necessary to account for the possibility and unity of experiences,—to account for the experienced unity of the mind in the midst of its modifications.

If this theory is to be maintained, the impressions of the past experiences ought to be regarded as conserved and reproduced by the noumenal Self. But is it consistent with the conception of the changeless attributeless noumenal Self, as maintained by the exponents of this theory ? If the noumenal Self receives the impressions, conserves them within itself and reproduces them when occasions arise, if it links together the phenomena of experiences and produces the consciousness of an apparently permanent and continuous ego, it cannot certainly be regarded as itself without any power or property or attribute, and without any change or modification or activity. It must then be conceived as having some definite powers and attributes, some definite activities and influences, and some consequent changes or modifications in the exercise of those powers, in the manifestation of those attributes, in the performance of those activities, in the exertion of those influences. That is to say, the so-called noumenal Self also would in reality be phenomenal in character. If every phenomenal entity presupposes a noumenal substance behind it, the self presupposed by the phenomenal consciousness or mind would presuppose another noumenal Self behind it and so on *ad infinitum*.

It may be contended that these powers, activities, etc., pertain to the nature of the reflected self, i.e., the self as immanent in and apparently conditioned by the individual mind, and not to the true non-dual noumenal Self. But is the so-called reflected self phenomenal or noumenal ? Evidently it is not noumenal, because one noumenal Self cannot be the reflection of another. If it is phenomenal in character, it must be regarded as a series of reflections on the series of phenomenal consciousnesses experienced as an individual mind and as being transformed along with the

latter. These changing phenomenal reflections can furnish no rational explanation for the apparent identity of the individual mind and the unity of its experiences and for the conservation and reproduction of the impressions of the experiences. For the explanation of these, reference must be made to the true noumenal Self. But then the inconsistencies mentioned above cannot be avoided. A powerless changeless attributeless Self cannot be consistently conceived as the cause of the conservation and reproduction of the impressions of the experiences, the unification of them as belonging to one individual and the consciousness of permanent individuality.

Again, which of the factors concerned is to be regarded as the true experiencing subject,—the true knower, feeler, willer, actor and rememberer? Is it the mind or the reflected self or the noumenal Self? It cannot of course be the mind, for the knowlege, etc., consist in mental modifications, which are always changing. If the mind is to know its own modifications, a distinction must be drawn between the mind as the subject and the mind as the object, the mind as remaining identical and the mind as appearing in diverse modified forms. If two such aspects of the same phenomenal mind could be rationally admitted, the noumenal Self and its reflection would be superfluous hypothesis. Can the reflected self be regarded as the experiencing subject? The reflected self also is, like the mind, neither changeless nor self-luminous. It becomes identified with the mind and appears to be modified along with its modifications. This being the case, the reflected self, conceived as distinct from the true noumenal Self, cannot be regarded as the true illuminer and recipient of the mental modifications and as the true identical knower, feeler, willer, and rememberer of all these mental modifications.

If however the reflected self be conceived as not in any way changed or modified along with the modifications of the individual mind on which it is reflected and with which it is associated, it cannot in that view be regarded as in any sense conditioned by or participating in the character of the individual mind. From that point of view, the so-called reflected self has got no individuality and no phenomenal character. It is then to be regarded as absolutely identical with and non-distinct from the one infinite changeless self-luminous universal Self, which is the non-dual noumenal Reality. It is then nothing but the universal Self, viewed through a particular individual mind as experienced and consequently appearing as individuated. If this interpretation is to be maintained, the explanation for individuality and knowledge etc. must be found in the nature of this universal Self, and this universal Self must be regarded as the true knower, feeler, willer, actor and rememberer.

According to this view, the ever-changing mental modifications are to be regarded as being presented to and illumined by the universal Self, their impressions as being received and retained and occasionally reproduced by it, the past, present and future modifications as being linked together and systematically arranged and regulated by it, the modifications in the forms of impulses to activity, judgments and restraints upon these impulses and exercises of selective powers upon them, etc. as being created by it, and so on. If such functions are performed by the Universal Self or Impersonal God, this Entity cannot consistently be conceived as perfectly attributeless, changeless, powerless, inactive and indifferent. A Being that is absolutely without any power or attribute, change or modification, cannot be expected to perform any

function. To receive and to retain any impression imply some sort of modification. To reproduce it requires some sort of activity. To unify and to regulate the mental modifications presuppose some power and self-exertion. How can the non-dual absolute Being, as this theory conceives it, be rationally thought of as performing such functions? Such functions can be regarded as possible, so far as we can infer from our experience, only for a self-conscious self-determining self-modifying powerful active personal Being. But such a personal Being, according to this theory, would be a phenomenal entity and would demand the existence of a noumenal Being behind it. This again would involve the same difficulties. Hence no final explanation for knowledge, etc., is available from this mode of reasoning.

It is argued by the advocates of this theory that the absolute noumenal Self does not really perform any function. All the functions are performed by the mind or the phenomenal consciousness. Receiving, retaining and reproducing impressions, unifying, arranging and interpreting them, thinking, feeling, desiring, acting, etc. are all done by the mind. They are all of the nature of mental modifications. They occur in the presence of the Self, they are presented to the Self, and the Self by its mere self-luminous presence witnesses and illumines them and is not in any way touched, moved or modified by them. Now, in this view of the case, the mind is to be regarded as a permanent entity admitting of modifications, a being identical with itself in the midst of all changes, i. e., a substance which manifests itself in and through various modifications in relation to the objects of phenomenal experience, but which does not lose its identity thereby. If this view is accepted, the mind itself may be conceived

as a self-existent and self-luminous as well as self-modifying entity, and the supposition of another self-luminous entity to make knowledge, etc., possible would be superfluous and against the Law of Parsimony of Hypothesis.

However let us admit that the mind, being of a phenomenal nature and always in a state of modification, gross or subtle, cannot be a self-existent and self-luminous substance and cannot by itself furnish any rational explanation for systematised knowledge and other phenomena of experience, and that the self-existent self-luminous changeless attributeless noumenal Self, by its mere luminous presence, supports and manifests the phenomenal consciousness and makes knowledge and other phenomena of experience possible. Now, the noumenal Self being regarded as one without a second, how can it account for the consciousness of a permanent individual ego in each mind as distinct from similar other individual egos recognised in the world of experience? What is the entity that this ego refers to? It is said that the same universal noumenal Self is immanent in, or reflected upon every phenomenal consciousness and is apparently conditioned and particularised by it, and that it is this apparently conditioned and particularised reflected self which is referred to and conceived as the individual ego sustaining its identity throughout all the modifications of the mind to which it is related. This apparently particularised self being really no other than the universal noumenal Self is regarded as self-luminous and as illumining and unifying all kinds of modifications of the particular mind.

Let us examine the explanation a little more closely. The same universal Self is said to be immanent in or

reflected upon and conditioned by the particular minds. Is the universal Self wholly present in and conditioned by every particular mind or is it divided into separate parts in order to be present in relation to different particular minds and to appear as differently conditioned by them ? The second alternative is of course to be rejected, because the supra-spatial and supra-temporal self-luminous Being cannot be conceived as divided into parts, i. e. into a plurality of individual selves. The all-pervading nature of the Self must be carefully distinguished from the all-pervading nature of the ether or space, the different portions of which are in contact with different material objects. The omnipresence of the Self must mean its entire presence everywhere as the supporter and illuminer of all phenomenal objects and subjects. If this be the case, the one universal Self must be the knower or experiencer of all the modifications of all the minds, each of the minds being an instrument of its knowledge or experience. How can this one universal undivided unindividuated noumenal Self be the source of the consciousness of distinct individuality in particular phenomenal minds ? How can it account for the differences in knowledge and ignorance, happiness and misery, virtue and vice, bondage and liberation, etc., of different individuals ? Why should not the same knowledge, etc., be participated in by all individuals, if individualty be at all possible ? The one noumenal Self being the ultimate experiencing subject behind all phenomenal consciousnesses, how can we conceive that it is at the same time realising truth and groping in ignorance, enjoying happiness and suffering misery, attaining good and embracing evil, shining in the glory of liberation and pining from the pangs of bondage ? Any appeal to the doctrine of reflection is futile, because the so-called reflected selves are no other than the one noumenal Self.

A way is sought to escape from this awkward position by the supposition that it is the noumenal Self as apparently conditioned and particularised by the mind, which is the source of the consciousness of individuality and which accounts for the difference in knowledge etc. of one individual from another. But how can the supposed conditioned and particularised selves be even apparently different from one another ? It is to be admitted that the conditionedness, the particularity and the distinctive characteristics are caused by the modifications of the particular minds and ascribed to the same universal noumenal Self. Accordingly what are called the conditioned particularised individual selves are the products of mental modifications and are phenomenal in character. If such selves are appealed to for explaining the possibility of the consciousness of individuality and the individual distinctions in knowledge, etc., evidently it involves the fallacy of interdependence. How can the phenomenal mind attain the status of an individual ego ? Answer—through its relation to the individual self. How can the infinite changeless noumenal Self be degraded to the position of a conditiond modifiable individual self ? Answer—through its relation to the individual phenomenal mind. This is certainly no rational explanation.

It is contended that the apparent interdependence cannot vitiate the explanation, because the connection between them is without any beginning. But can we satisfy our reason by this appeal to the beginninglessness of the relation ? If either of them cannot be conceived as *existing* independently of its relation to the other, to separate them *in thought* would be a mere act of abstraction. In that case the self-conscious and self-modifying ego or self as manifesting itself in and through phenomenal consciousnesses

should be regarded as representing the true nature of the Self, the element of self-luminous identity and the element of illumined changeableness being two aspects of the same concrete reality. A rational thinker can claim to discover in the complex nature of this concrete reality the relation between two distinct entities,—one changeless and self-luminous and another changing and non-luminous,—only if he can establish their separate existences, can logically determine the nature of their relation and can find out the ground of their relation. But the appeal to the beginninglessness of the relation between the Self and the mind implies that their separate existences are unestablished. The nature of their relation also has been admitted to be inexplicable in terms of any of the real recognised relations. The ground of the relation, which is logically indefinable, is asserted to be found out in the conception of positive Ignorance, but the relation of Ignorance to either of the related entities—the Self and the mind—remains also inexplicable, and Ignorance itself is found to be incapable of being regarded as either existent or non-existent. Instead of having recourse to such inexplicable entities and their inexplicable relations and unmaintainable explanations by reference to them, is it not a more reasonable and straightforward course to stop at the conception of the self-conscious as well self-modifying, identical as well as changing, experiencing as well as self-experienced ego or self, and to confess our inability to explain how identity and change, self-luminosity and self-modification, knowingness and knowableness, noumenal and phenomenal characters, can be reconciled in the nature of the same Self ?

It may however be argued that though the relation between the self and the mind has no beginning, it has an end in what is called liberation, and thus the independent

existence and the transcendent infinite self-luminous changeless character of the Self are established. It is therefore held that in view of this transcendent self-existence and infinite changeless self-luminous character of the Self, it becomes the unevadable task of speculative philosophy to explain the nature of the phenomenal mind in relation to it and to indicate the character of the relation that may possibly subsist between the noumenal Self and the phenomenal mind. Since the noumenal Self is beyond the scope of phenomenal experience, this relation, it may be said, cannot be explained on the analogy of any kind of relation that is found between one object of phenomenal experience and another of the same order of reality ; hence to indicate the nature of this relation the category of inexplicableness is adopted, and an analogy is drawn between this relation and the relation of an illusory object with its substratum. As in the case of the relation of an illusory object with its substratum ignorance is the ground, so also in the case of the relation of the phenomenal mind with the noumenal Self, though on a different plane.

Such arguments also cannot evade the difficulty. The existence of the Self in its transcendent infinite changeless self-luminous character in the state of liberation is itself a matter of theory and cannot be assumed as an established truth. Even if it be admitted to be a matter of spiritual experience in the state of trance, it becomes a phenomenon of individual experience in a particular state of phenomenal consciousness and cannot be demonstrated to be the true realisation of the noumenal reality. Secondly, the relation which has no beginning in time cannot be rationally conceived as having an end in time, and hence the possibility of liberation in the sense in which this theory

interprets it is open to doubt. It cannot be reasonably maintained that Ignorance being the ground of the relation, the destruction of Ignorance would lead to the destruction of the relation and liberation of the Self, because Ignorance being eternally associated with the self cannot be expected to be destroyed by any means. All knowledge being of the nature of mental modification and all mental modification being the product of the association of Ignorance with the Self, no knowledge can be conceived as the destroyer of Ignorance. Thus the changeless self-luminous infinite and unconditioned character of the noumenal Self apart from the phenomenal mind can in no way be satisfactorily established, and hence the necessity for having recourse to the inexplicable relation between such a Self and the mind does not arise. The human knowledge being confined within the domain of phenomenal consciousness, ought not the inquisitive rational faculty of man rest contented with the realisation of its inability to solve the supra-phenomenal problems with regard to the ultimate grounds of individual identity, the possibility of knowledge, remembrance, etc., the relation between the subject and the object of experience, the origin of the phenomenal universe, and so on and so forth ?

The exponents of the theory have ultimately to rely upon particular texts of the Scriptures and on their authority to assert dogmatically that the Self of all is one changeless attributeless undivided infinite self-luminous Being. We have on various occasions discussed the weakness and non-finality of the authority of the Scriptures and pointed out their unreliableness as a source of the knowledge of ultimate truths. We need not repeat the arguments here.

Now let us assume that there is ultimately one non-dual absolute Self and that it appears as a plurality of selves by being reflected on and apparently conditioned and particularised by the plurality of minds. Further, let us concede that this assumption enables us to account for the possibility of knowledge, etc. It is to be noted that this assumption involves (1) the assumption of the unity and non-duality, changelessness and attributelessness, the inactivity and unconcernedness, the self-luminous and illumining character of the Noumenal Self, (2) the assumption of the continuous phenomenal existence of a plurality of minds from eternity, (3) the assumption of the possibility of the one Infinite spaceless and timeless Noumenal Self being reflected on and conditioned by the plurality of minds and appearing thereby as a plurality of particular phenomenal selves or egos, (4) the assumption of the identity of each of the conditioned particularised phenomenal selves through all mental and bodily changes and all births and deaths, (5) the assumption of the possibility of the realisation of the unconditioned noumenal character of the Self in particular cases and the consequent liberation of the particular apparent selves without affecting the destinies of others. We have found that each of these assumptions is beset with logical difficulties and involves inconsistencies. But even if these assumptions be allowed, does the theory stand ?

Even though the phenomenal minds are regarded as existing from eternity, they are not and cannot be conceived as existing by themselves and continuing to exist by their own rights. If the plurality of minds could be conceived as existing by themselves independently of the Noumenal Self, their existence, though phenomenal, would be as real as that of the Noumenal Self. In that case their

relation with the Self could in no way be established, and even if the relation were recognised as mysterious, the cessation of this beginingless relation and the attainment of liberation could not be regarded as possible. The phenomenal minds, on account of the very fact that they are phenomenal and not absolutely real, are, as they must be, regarded as owing their existence to the Noumenal Self, which is conceived as the only one Absolute Reality. Here the question arises, how can the origin or derivative existence (though without beginning in time) of the plurality of phenomenal minds be rationally traced in the nature of the Noumenal Self? The Noumenal Self is conceived as powerless, attributeless and changeless, and the only positive character of the Self is its self-luminosity, which is identical with self-existence. If it were conceived as having in its nature the power and activity of producing from within itself or manifesting itself in the plurality of phenomenal minds, these minds might be temporally co-eternal with itself and it might be regarded as non-dual in the sense that the effects are substantially non-different from the cause; but in that case it would not be powerless, inactive, absolutely changeless and above cause-effect relation. The Absolute Reality would in that case be the one Noumenal Self as manifesting itself eternally in and through the plurality of minds and the plurality of objects related to them. But this is not the conception of the Absolute Reality maintained by the advocates of this theory. How then can the appearance of the plurality of phenomenal minds and objects be accounted for in accordance with their conception of the Absolute Reality?

It has been pointed out in the exposition that according to this theory the appearance of the plurality of minds and their objects is accounted for by the

supposition of the presence of one additional positive principle, called Ignorance, eternally associated with the Noumenal Self; but it is asseted that this Ignorance cannot be regarded as a second reality related to the Self, in as much as it has no existence apart from the existence of the Self,—it exists in, by and for the Self. Now, we are required to consider the possibility of the presence of such an Ignorance in relation to the absolutely unrelated unconditioned unmodifiable self-luminous Noumenal Self, also to consider whether or how this supposed Ignorance can rationally account for the derivative conditional dependent existence and diverse characters of the plurality of individual minds and the various orders of objects of experience.

If we take the idea of ignorance from our experience of the acquisition of the knowledge of objects which we had not known before or from our experience of having been unaware of any object during sleep, the ignorance may be conceived subjectively as the absence of knowledge or objectively as a veil upon the possible objects of knowledge. If we take the idea from the analysis of our experience of errors and illusions, such as mistaking a rope for a snake, perceiving water in the desert, viewing the sun as a small shining ball moving in the sky, etc., ignorance is found to account for one aspect of these experiences, viz. the veiling of the true nature of the rope, the desert, the sun, etc., from the perceiving mind; but mere ignorance, as we understand it, cannot by itself explain why the rope appears as a snake and not as a number of big buildings or anything else, why in the desert we perceive water instead of many lions or hills or other things, why the sun is seen as a shining ball and not as a plurality of dark huge demons or other kinds of objects. Mere ignorance, whether

conceived positively or negatively, cannot offer any explanation for the nature and number of the illusory objects or events which appear on any substratum whose true character is unknown to or veiled from any knowing mind. Moreover, it is evident that the ignorance is always relative to the minds whose powers of knowledge are imperfect and limited. Ignorance is inconceivable without reference to the faculty of knowledge and the object of knowledge, and in relation to an omniscient Being.

Now, Ignorance in any of its conceivable senses does not appear to be capable of being regarded as associated with the absolutely self-luminous non-dual noumenal Self. Ignorance, in the negative sense of the absence of knowledge about any object as well as in the positive sense of a veil over the true nature of the object of knowledge, is correlative to knowledge; but the Noumenal Self has by itself neither the faculty of knowledge nor any object of knowledge. The non-dual unmodifiable Pure Noumenal consciousness can be neither the subject or the object of ignorance, as it can be neither the subject nor the object of knowledge. This absolutely self-luminous Being cannot possibly be conceived as having its nature veiled or concealed either wholly or partially from itself, because the very attempt to conceive this would mean the recognition of the distinction of subject and object within itself, the distinction of a knowing aspect and a knowable aspect in its nature, and also the distinction of parts within its nature. All such distinctions are of course inadmissible. As the existence of any other real object, the true nature of which might be unknown to or veiled from this noumenal Self, or the existence of any other independent conscious being, from which the true nature of this Self might be veiled, is not admitted, Ignorance cannot be conceived as

related to this Self in any way. Ignorance cannot be supposed to be a property, either essential or non-essential, pertaining to the eternal nature of the Self, not only because the Self is conceived as absolutely attributeless and self-luminous, but also because we fail to form any ideal of or attach any meaning to Ignorance in connection with the non-dual subject-object-less Self. The idea of veiling also cannot be appropriately associated with the idea of the Noumenal Self, because if the existence of the Self were entirely veiled, the phenomenal world would not appear as existent at all, and if the consciousness or some specific characteristics of the Self be regarded as veiled, the Self's consciousness has to be differentiated from Its existence and to be conceived as Its attribute, or It has to be conceived as possessing some specific attributes. This is not however admitted by the exponents of the theory.

The advocates of the theory sometimes argue that Ignorance is a property or attribute or power which eternally appears to and is illumined by the non-dual Self and becomes the cause of the manifestation of the plurality of subjects and objects constituting the universe, but which is destroyed by the true knowledge of the real character of the Self. They assert that whatever is destroyed by true knowledge is to be regarded as ignorance or the product of ignorance, and that accordingly the source of the phenomenal plurality is appropriately conceived as Ignorance. Against this argument the first objection of a rationalist critic is that there is no definite proof of the destruction of the world of plurality by true knowledge about the nature of the Self. On the contrary the very possibility of knowledge implies, according to the advocates of the theory themselves, the presence of the phenomenal world. Knowledge is conceived as essentially consisting in mental modification,

and the Self by itself is regarded as not having any kind of knowledge. Hence the true knowledge about the character of the Self, if possible at all, must belong to the mind. If this knowledge be the destroyer of the universe and its source, the mind must be regarded as outside this universe and not the product of the supposed source of the universe. This is evidently inadmissible. What is actually experienced is this. The individual minds suffer from imperfections and limitations of knowledge, which they seek to transcend. By dint of efforts they expand the spheres of their knowledge and acquire more and more accurate and correct knowledge of the objects of the universe, their relations, the modes of their production and their inner unity. In this way the mental modifications, in which knowledge consists, become more and more in accordance with the true nature of the objective phenomenal world, and there grows the consciousness of a greater and greater consistency and harmony of these mental modifications in relation with one another and in relation to the objects that face them. Accordingly the highest knowledge which can be expected to be attained should consist in the most consistent conception of the phenomenal universe, the realisation of the inner unity and harmony within it, the apprehension of the ultimate source of all derivative existences, and the consciousness of perfect peace and tranquillity and self-fulfilment within itself.

Knowledge, in the sense in which we experience and understand it, cannot be expected to make any noumenon altogether distinct from and above and beyond and unrelated to the phenomenal world the object of its pursuit and attainment, and without the presence of the individual mind no knowledge is conceivable. If the noumenal reality means the ultimate self-existent ground and source and

substance of the phenomenal world, the perfect knowledge of this phenomenal world should consist in the comprehension of it as the manifestation of the noumenal reality and the perfect knowledge of the noumenal reality should consist in recognising its true nature as manifesting itself in the phenomenal world. How then can it be expected that the knowledge of the noumenal reality is attainable without reference to the phenomenal world and that this knowledge should altogether destroy this world or prove this world to be illusory ? It is of course quite conceivable that the mind should at some stage modify itself into the form of deep concentration upon the nature of the noumenal reality as conceived by it, i. e. upon its own idea of the nature of the ultimate ground and source of the universe,—and be altogether indifferent to the world of derivative existences and unconscious of their presence. But that cannot be construed as meaning that this phenomenal world is thereby proved to be false or illusory, that it is destroyed by the true knowledge of the noumenal reality. Thus, as it is not demonstrated that the knowledge of the true character of the noumenal Self destroys the world, no adequate reason can be offered for regarding this world as the product of Ignorance. Moreover, if the source of this pluralistic universe had been truly destructible by perfect knowledge about the noumenal Self, and unless a plurality of Ignorances be supposed to be the sources of the world for the plurality of minds, the attainment of this knowledge by a single individual would destroy the world for good. But as admitted by the advocates of this theory, the true knowledge of the noumenal Self is not incompatible with the appearance of this phenomenal world of plurality even to the individual who attains this knowledge. How then can the source of the plurality be consistently conceived as Ignorance ?

Now, let us concede that Ignorance is somehow eternally associated with the nature of the self-existent and self-luminous, changeless and attributeless, infinite and non-dual Noumenal Self, and somehow veils Its true character and makes It appear as a plurality of finite minds and material objects. In this view of the case, the nature of Ignorance has to be determined in such a way that it may be sufficient to account for the nature of this phenomenal world of plurality. This world is found to be a well-ordered organic system, in which all phenomena occur regularly and uniformly in accordance with universal laws, in which the minds are adapted to the bodily organisms through which they operate, the mental functions are adapted to the objective environments, the means are adapted to their ends, the future is adapted to the past, the knowledge, feeling, etc. of one individual are adapted to those of others, the enjoyments and sufferings, the successes and failures, of individuals are adapted to their actions, and so on. Such universal order and adjustment in the world-system indicates an immanent plan and purpose, according to which this system is produced and regulated. This system, when more carefully scrutinised, is found to be not only a natural order, but also a moral order. All this is admitted by the exponents of the theory under consideration. Now, in order to account adequately for this phenomenal world-order,—the design and purpose in this world of effects—it is necessary to suppose, in accordance with the law of invariable concomitance established within the domain of our experience, the powers of pre-vision, judgment, selection, adjustment, regulation, etc., in the cause. These powers cannot obviously be ascribed to the essential character of the changeless attributeless non-dual Self. Hence these powers ought to be regarded as pertaining to the nature of Ignorance, which is conceived as the cause of this phenomenal

universe. But the capacity of merely veiling the true character of the Noumenal Self does not involve the presence of these powers. Hence Ignorance, if it be conceived as some inexplicable positive entity merely veiling the true nature of the Self, cannot offer any explanation for the order and harmony in this phenomenal universe.

There is no justifiable ground for holding that Ignorance, being illumined by the changeless self-luminous Self, whose nature it veils, becomes characterised by these powers, or that the Self being conditioned by or reflected upon Ignorance becomes endowed with these powers. When an individual with imperfect powers of observation perceives an illusory snake in the place of a rope, the real character of the rope is *partially* veiled through the *ignorance of the perceiving individual* and it appears as the snake through the influence of some other co-operating causes, such as the impressions of the snake already present in the mind, the reproduction of the impressions at the sight of some partial features of the rope on account of some kind of similarity, the dimness of light, distance, etc. The mere veiling of the true character of the rope cannot be the sufficient cause of the appearance of the snake with its special features. In the case of the Self, there is no other observing individual with imperfect knowing power, there is no possibility of the similarity of features between the Self and anything else, there is no possibility of the Self's being partially veiled and partially manifested, there is no possibility of the presence of the impressions of the phenomenal world and its order and adjustment in any knowing mind nor of the presence of any other co-operating causes. The recognition of any such possibility would be inconsistent with the theory of the non-duality of the Self. Hence even if we admit the possibility of the presence of Ignorance without

the presence of any ignorant observing mind, and also the possibility of this Ignorance being illumined and manifested by the self-luminous Self to which it pertains, this Ignorance as illumined by the Self can somehow be conceived as the cause of the veiling of the Self and its appearance as what it is not; but it can by no means be conceived as an omnipotent and omniscient creative power capable of producing and sustaining such a wonderfully ordered and regulated world-system consisting of a mutually adjusted and organically united plurality of minds and material objects. The changeless attributeless actionless impersonal Self also, on account of the mere veiling of its true character, cannot be conceived as becoming an active self-modifying personal creator endowed with the attributes of knowledge and will and the powers of pre-vision, judgment, selection, gradation, adjustment, etc. Even if infinite non-phenomenal consciousness and infinite non-phenomenal bliss be abstracted from pure Existence and regarded as the essential attributes of the non-dual Self, the veiling of these attributes by Ignorance would mean Its appearance as pure Existence and not as an omnipotent and omniscient personal Being, capable of producing and sustaining this harmonious world-system.

What, then, should be regarded as the material and efficient cause of this harmoniously and teleologically designed natural and moral order of the phenomenal universe boundless in space and time, which is, as proclaimed in this theory, illusorily ascribed to the nature of the non-dual Self ? If Ignorance has to be regarded as this cause, it is no longer to be conceived either as the absence of knowledge or as a veil, but as a positive creative power with an inexhaustible fund of wisdom, with a

supreme ideal in view, and an infinite capacity to realise this ideal progressively in a phenomenal world-order. If, again, such a power be conceived as pertaining to the nature of the non-dual Self, the Self cannot be conceived as attributeless pure self-luminous Existence or changeless impersonal Consciousness, but must be conceived as essentially and eternally a Supreme self-conscious Personal Being with infinite creative power. This would be inconsistent with the theory under review, and this is certainly not what Ignorance connotes to an ordinary rational intelligence. If, however, Ignorance is accepted in the sense of such a creative power and if it is regarded as pertaining to the nature of the non-dual Self, there would be no justification for regarding it as unreal and its products as illusory.

Now, if, as shown above, Ignorance in the ordinary acceptable sense cannot offer any adequate explanation for the appearance of the phenomenal world-order, as it is experienced, the plurality of subjects and objects of this world cannot be regarded as illusory. The Supreme Self may be conceived as creating by the exercise of His creative power the plurality of subjects and objects in the universe, or may in view of the essential non-difference of the power from the possessor of the power, be conceived as manifesting Himself in the plurality of subjects and objects; but He cannot be rationally conceived as illusorily appearing in the forms of such subjects and objects, because there is no justification for the application of the idea of illusion in this case. We are not here concerned with the objections that may legitimately arise against the view of the Supreme Self as essentially endowed with real creative power. We have discussed them elsewhere. But the conclusion which we have arrived at as the result

of the foregoing critical examination of the doctrine of Ignorance and which has important bearing on the point at issue is that there is no adequate reason for regarding the plurality of individual selves as illusory or unreal,—as products of Ignorance,—as false appearances on the substratum of the Non-dual Noumenal Self. If this criticism is valid, there is no justification for holding that the one changeless attributeless infinite absolute self-luminous Being, which is conceived as the ultimate noumenal ground of the entire phenomenal universe, is also the true self of all individual subjects,—that it is this non-dual noumenal Self, which through mere ignorance illusorily appears as the plurality of selves.

It can be readily admitted that to think of the phenomenal world of sensuous and mental experience as false or illusory and to think of the true self of every individual as absolutely pure changeless attributeless self-luminous and infinite, eternally free from all kinds of bondage, limitation, imperfection and sorrow, and as identical with the ultimate non-dual differenceless noumenal Ground and Substance of the entire universe, have a great subjective value for every rational human being. This grand conception carefully cherished and earnestly sought to be realised in distinct consciousness naturally makes a man indifferent to the transitory and finite objects of sensuous and mental enjoyment, enables him to get rid of all passions and desires and attachments and weaknesses, helps him to rise above all cares and anxieties of worldly life, washes away all selfishness and meanness and narrowness and materialistic greed from his mind, inspires his mind with a deep sense of spiritual unity among all men and all creatures and even among all phenomenal existences in the universe, and establishes a blissful calmness and tranquillity in his

consciousness. It has a great social value also, in as much as it creates a sense of unity among all members of the human society, awakens a brotherly feeling and an idea of community of real interests in every individual, develops a liberal and cosmopolitan outlook even in worldly affairs and subdues the spirit of unhealthy competition and rivalry, hatred and malice, suspiciousness and vindictiveness, violence and hostility. If the individual and the collective life of humanity is disciplined and developed in accordance with this sublime and beautiful conception of the essential spiritual nature of all men and animals as well as of their apparently physical environments and the fundamental spiritual unity of all of them in the midst of all these apparent diversities, many of the serious and puzzling problems of the practical life of mankind may disappear or be peacefully solved.

But however sublime and beautiful the doctrine may appear to our imagination and however valuable it may be in ennobling, beautifying, tranquillizing, unifying and spiritualizing our individual and social life, this cannot be accepted as the criterion of its ultimate truth. Nor can it assure us that the realisation of this idea of the absolute identity of the individual self with the one non-dual changeless Absolute Spirit in our phenomenal consciousness will lead to the state of eternal liberation after death.

Thus we find that when finality is claimed for this conception of the Self as a metaphysical truth, various logical difficulties assail it and they cannot be successfully overcome. Hence the ultimate nature of the Self remains as unascertained in this theory as in the previous theories.

Concluding Remarks :—

We have in these pages briefly reviewed the principal view-points from which the true nature of the Self has been sought to be ascertained, and the unanswerable logical difficulties have led us to the inevitable conclusion that none of these schools of thought can logically maintain their position and can offer satisfactory explanation for the phenomena essentially related to the idea of the Self. We therefore find ourselves under rational obligation to confess that the ultimate nature of the Self remains, inspite of all these philosophical speculations, as mysterious as ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

SĀDHANĀ

INTRODUCTORY

Man being a self-conscious and self-determining finite creature in this phenomenal world may be said to be a *Sādhaka* by nature. He feels the wants and demands of his finite nature, is moved by the impulses to satisfy them, deliberates upon the ends or objects which being attained are expected to satisfy those wants and demands, thinks of the courses of actions which may lead to the attainment of those ends or objects and directs his mental and physical powers in pursuit of them. He feels that among the various possible courses of intellectual, emotional, volitional and physical activities, he has the power and option to choose and adopt any one, which he judges to be right or expedient. His mental and physical capacities may be,—and of course are—limited; the materials at his disposal may be scanty; his environments may put various restrictions upon his activities; but he feels that he has got the freedom to make whatever use he likes of these limited capacities and these materials at his disposal and also to exercise considerable influence upon the external circumstances. This consciousness of the relative freedom of the human self is the foundation of man's morality and religion. *Sādhanā* consists in the well-planned systematic courses of self-discipline and action directed towards the attainment of such chosen ends or objects which are expected to satisfy the felt wants and demands of a man's nature. *Sādhanā* may however be of different orders and of different characters. Some kinds of *Sādhanā* lead to the satisfaction of particular wants. But

these wants trouble the human mind again and again, and some particular wants being satisfied, others take their place and create fresh troubles. Hence the more thoughtful and far-sighted among men are led to think whether any course of *Sādhanā* can be adopted which may satisfy once for all the most fundamental demands of the human nature or cut at the very root of all wants, so that no sorrow may touch them in the future and absolute emancipation from all sources of sorrow may be attained. Such a course of self-discipline and systematic practice is called *Sādhanā* in the restricted religious sense of the term. The character of such *Sādhanā* is determined by the conceptions of the ultimate nature of the self, the final ideal realisable by it, the root-cause of the sorrows to which the self becomes subject in this phenomenal world and the most effective weapon for destroying this cause.

Now, it has been found that different thinkers in the human society have arrived at different conclusions with regard to these ultimate questions; accordingly different kinds of *Sādhanā* have come into vogue and practised by different sects of men. Thus different religious sects have come and are coming into existence in the human race, under the pressure of the same subjective necessity of the human nature.

All these thinkers and the sects following them assert that their own conclusions about those ultimate questions have alone their objective validity, to the exclusion of all other conclusions arrived at by other thinkers. Hence the ultimate ideal, which is proclaimed to be attainable by each type of *Sādhanā*, is regarded by its advocates as alone having an objective truth. Not only that; the particular experiences of the *Sādhakas* of particular sects in the

particular stages of the progress of their *Sādhanā* are also regarded as having valid objective reference, though this is not unoften denied by the *Sādhakas* of other sects. We should however clearly distinguish between objective truths which are independent of the peculiarities of the *Sādhakas'* minds and their process of *Sādhanā*, and the subjective experiences of those *Sādhakas*, which are the results of their mental conditions and the methods of their *Sādhanā*.

In this Chapter, we are going to examine how far the claims of the fundamental methods of *Sādhanā* of the particular religious sects to lead to objectively valid experiences can be accepted as having any rational ground.

I

(Exposition)

The highest ideal of life is absolute liberation from sorrow, and this is attained through systematic moral and spiritual endeavours for the absolute destruction of desire. This desire again can be destroyed, according to some advocates, when the ignorance about the nature of the self is destroyed, the illusion of the permanent self disappears and the true knowledge of the momentary character of the self and all things of the objective world is attained. This, then, is what religion consists in.

Sādhanā, in the preliminary stages, consists in the preparation of the mind for a purely contemplative life through the practice of the systematic discipline of the body, the senses and the mind, the practice of disinterested service to others and the culture of the purity of thought, word and deed, and finally in the incessant contemplation of the true nature of the objects of phenomenal experience. The truths about the world of experience are expressed by these advocates in the following four formulas viz. (a) all is sorrow (सर्वं दुःखं) (b) all is momentary (सर्वं क्षणिकं) (c) all is unique (सर्वं स्वलक्षणं i. e. there is no generality or attribute or anything having generality, attribute) and (d) all is void (सर्वं शून्यं). By the incessant contemplation of these truths, all thoughts and impressions to the contrary should be removed, all desires for and attachments to the worldly objects should be destroyed, these truths should be fully realised and *Nirvāna*, which is the highest objective ideal of human life, should be attained. It is held by them that as these truths were actually experienced by the greatest of the *Sādhakas* in the past and are even now experienced by those who

practise such contemplation, these must be regarded as objective truths.

(Critical Examination.)

Let us now critically examine whether these formulas can be regarded as representing the objectively true character of things. We assume here that as a result of the long-practised contemplation of the meanings of these formulas and the suppression of all thoughts and ideas to the contrary, they may appear to the contemplating mind quite vividly as the objects of experience. But does it really imply that there is nothing but sorrow in the world, that there is no non-momentary object and no general class of objects and that the world is absolutely without any substance ? Let us examine the conceptions one by one.

(a) The first truth, according to this view, is that all is sorrow. Now, what is the meaning of sorrow ? Is it an attribute of all the objects of the world or is it a general name for all the objects of the world, apart from any reference to the perceiving mind ? In either case it should be an objective reality which may not necessarily produce in the human mind what we ordinarily understand by sorrow, and the contemplation or even the experience of the world as such cannot be expected to create in the mind a feeling of detachment or aversion to the world. If the term 'sorrow' is used in the ordinary sense, then it must mean a condition of the mind, and the objective world cannot be called sorrow. The only rationally acceptable meaning that may be attached to the expression is that all objects of the world affect the human mind in such a way as to produce sorrow in it. If this were true, then all human minds would experience nothing but sorrow by

coming in contact with the objects of the world, because sorrow cannot be of such a nature as to be produced in the mind without being felt by it. But we actually experience joy as well as sorrow as a result of our relations to the diverse phenomena of the world. Moreover, sorrow is and can be experienced by the mind only through contrast with joy. In the absence of the experience of joy, sorrow also would not be experienced, and there would thus be no desire for getting rid of sorrow and attaining joy or bliss. Hence there would be no *Sādhanā* and no idea of *Nirvāna.* Consequently 'all is sorrow', if considered as an objective truth, would involve self-contradiction. It may however be an outlook upon the world and may have subjective utility in *Sādhanā.*

(b) The second truth which this school asks the *Sādhakas* to contemplate is that all is momentary and as a result of this contemplation all existences may appear to be momentary to the mind of the *Sādhaka* and he may form the attitude of unconcern towards them and thus get rid of sorrows due to attachment to the worldly life and worldly objects. But does it imply that it is an objective truth ? Let us examine.

The sense of impurity, namely that I am now defiled by defects, and the sense of purity, namely that I am now not defiled by defects, can be explained only on the assumption that I am the same individual person experiencing purity and impurity in my life, and it would have no meaning if I have no such continued existence. This sense of purity and impurity is not possible in the case of what is partless and remains merely for a moment. The aforesaid distinction cannot be explained either by any difference of time or by that of space, because the self

being momentary does not exist for two moments and being partless does not cover even two points of space. According to this view there is no occasion for the same mind to pass from one stage to another or to advance from the actual state to any ideal state, or to proceed from the state of sorrow to a state free from it. So there is no efficacy in the *Sādhanā*. Moreover, every mind is regarded as distinct and momentary, so this one momentary mind can have one and only one objective reference, and thus has hardly a chance to become distracted; hence the concentration of it is natural and there is no possibility of its disturbance. For this reason *Sādhanā* is unnecessary.

Advocate—The flow of consciousnesses having the same form is taken as the concentrated mind, and this is what has to be attained by *Sādhanā*.

Critic—This is meaningless. When every momentary mind exists separately, there cannot be one continued entity, namely the mind in flow. So it cannot be said that concentration belongs to the flow-mind. And when all minds are distinct, whether their objective references are similar or not, they must be regarded as concentrated. To speak more accurately, the question of concentration does not arise at all, because there is nothing like distracted mind. Hence, if what the advocate says is right, then *Sādhanā* has no place in his life.

Moreover, if the self is momentary, then there is experience in some self, and its impression is in another and in another still there is its remembrance. So owing to the momentary character of the self, there is no locus of the impression, its intensity and the remembrance of impression.

Advocate—Why not ? The continuous flow because of its pervading in the succeeding consciousnesses will be the said locus.

Critic—This cannot be. The flow cannot be accepted as momentary or non-momentary or as different or as non-different from momentary consciousnesses. Because the flow is not a thing, and because the successive consciousness, the like of which did not exist before, is produced every moment, the intensity of thought has no locus.

Moreover, the advocates think that by contemplation the taint of attachment and the like is destroyed, but this does not stand the test of examination. Contemplation can never add any peculiar feature to consciousness which becomes lost at the very moment of its birth. It can never bear any fruit because each consciousness rises as the same at every moment and becomes lost immediately without anything of it left over. Besides, each momentary consciousness with its original taint, due to its natural power (if such capacity be admitted) to produce a similar momentary consciousness, will be able to produce a consciousness similar to itself and not any essentially dissimilar one. Hence out of any tainted consciousness under the bondage of *Karma*, no perfectly pure consciousness leading to *Nirvāna* can be produced. So it comes to this that because consciousness is momentary, contemplation for the sake of the destruction of impurity is of no avail. Also because nothing has any continued existence after production, nothing can be an object of meditation. Not to speak of the results of contemplation or meditation, contemplation or meditation itself would be impossible or meaningless in the absence of any abiding self.

Advocate—The momentary conscious units, constituting the series or the stream, are related or united by way of causation, natural and moral (*The Law of Karma.*)

Critic—Who is there to bear witness to this causal relation ? The individual momentary units having no knowledge of the factors related and the relation among them, and the aggregate of the successive units or the stream of consciousness having no existence apart from the existence of the momentary units and no consciousness or knowledge of its own, the knowledge of the causal relation among the units or of the *Law of Karma* is evidently impossible. Hence consistently with the doctrine of the momentariness of the self, all such assertions must be regarded as unwarranted.

In accordance with the conception viz. the self is a flow of consciousness without any noumenal reality, there cannot be any room for morality or religion or any other rational scheme of life. Morality, religion and all other schemes for the regulation of the individual as well as the social life of man imply as their fundamental condition the freedom of the human self to choose any particular line of action, to pursue any preconceived end or ideal and to control the particular impulses, feelings, thoughts and desires for the sake of the ideal. How can such freedom be exercised by any momentary consciousness which dies out as soon as it is born or by a series of such momentary consciousnesses ? How can such a consciousness or such a flow of consciousnesses form an idea of a future end or ideal and frame a scheme for the regulation of the activities (if any) of the particular units of consciousness, which will be born and destroyed in the natural course in the future ? Then again, every plan for the discipline of life implies

that the individual should build up his own character, that he should become in the future what he makes himself by dint of his voluntary activities at present, that he should reap the consequences of his own actions. In the absence of any permanent self, this is evidently impossible. According to the theory under review, there are only momentary actions and enjoyments and sufferings, but no actor or enjoyer or sufferer, and hence no one to seek for getting rid of sorrow, for adopting any systematic course of discipline with this purpose in view, and for attaining liberation. Thus, morality, religion, etc. become meaningless.

(c) Now about the contemplation on the truth that every object is of a unique character and that no object belongs to the same class with and has qualities in common with any other object. This also cannot be regarded as an objective truth, because no such entity can be an object of thought at all. Contemplation is possible only of an object qualified by some attribute. The mind can never form any conception of any entity, of which nothing can be predicated, no attribute can be affirmed, and the predication of any attribute implies a generality involved in it. So the thought of a unique particular entity, believed by the advocate can never be possible. Thus an entity which exists for a single moment, which has no extension in space, no duration in time, similar to nothing and which is unique in character, cannot be the content of any rational knowledge. So the objective existence of such an entity is inconceivable. The idea that all objects are such unique characters is against all evidence of valid cognition. Thus the alleged contemplation on the idea that "everything is unique in character" cannot be accepted as having any valid objective reference.

(d) Now about the contemplation of the fourth formula, viz. "all is void". Does this formula represent the objective truth ? A *Sādhaka* may practise the complete withdrawal of his attention from all worldly existences and think within himself that nothing exists—that all is void. Or he may make his mind completely vacant or objectless, *i.e.* thoughtless, and having come down from that state of the mind may think that that state of consciousness represents the real truth and the world of experience has no substance in it. But such contemplation cannot lead to the conclusion that the world is really non-existent or unsubstantial. It may have subjective utility to the *Sādhaka*, but cannot be regarded as having any objective reference. For proving, if possible, the non-existence or unsubstantial character of the objective world, rational grounds must be adduced. But *Sādhanā* cannot prove the objective validity of the *Sádhya* or the object of contemplation. (For further refutation—See Critical Examination of *Jnána-Sádhaná*).

II

(Expository)

Every self has an inherent hankering for the avoidance of the painful states of mundane existence and the attainment of perfect happiness, the avoidance of ignorance and error and the attainment of perfect knowledge, the avoidance of weakness and slavery and the attainment of perfect power. It is this hankering which awakens in the self, when it is equipped with a human body with developed senses and mind, the desire for moral and spiritual discipline.

According to some other religious systems, *Sádhaná* consists chiefly in moral and ascetic practices, supplemented by the worship of *supermen*. who are regarded as the

incarnations of the realisation of the highest ideal of human life. They hold that it is on account of attachment to and enjoyment of the worldly objects and the worldward movements, that the natural upward movement of the self is obstructed and it becomes bound down to this mundane existence full of sorrows. Hence to get rid of sorrows, the obstacles in the path of the natural tendency and power of the self to rise to higher and higher blissful planes must be removed. This can be accomplished by the sacrifice of our worldly possessions for the good of others, by the practice of asceticism and indifference to worldly concerns, by the culture of purity in thought, word and deed, and by the worship of the liberated persons and contemplation of their perfect nature. As a result of such discipline it rises to higher and higher planes of happiness, knowledge and power. It acquires the desirable qualities and gets rid of the undesirable ones. At the highest stage of spiritual advancement, it attains perfect liberation from sorrow, weakness and ignorance and becomes established in the plane of infinite bliss, infinite power for good actions and infinite perception and knowledge. Thus in the state of liberation, the self becomes omnipotent, omniscient and blissful, and it lives in what is called supramundane space.

It is held by many thinkers of this school that the above glorious attributes, which are experienced by the self in the emancipated state, are really inherent in the essential nature of the self; but they are veiled in the mundane state by the *Karma* attached to it. It is really the association of *Karma* with the self which constitutes its mundane state. So long as the dominion of *Karma* cannot be got rid of, the self cannot shine in its essential purity and perfection. Through a systematic course of moral and

spiritual discipline, old *Karma* has to be purged off and new *Karma* should not be allowed to be created. When the veil of *Karma* is thus destroyed, the inherent purity and perfection of the self is revealed and the self reaches the ultimate goal of its journey in the world and experiences infinite knowledge, power and bliss within itself.

CRITICAL.

Now, the subjective utility of this process of *Sādhanā* for making the mind free from cares and anxieties of the world, for the restraint of the desires and passions, which create troubles in our life, for the enjoyment of calmness and serenity within and the establishment of a state of indifference to the sorrows of life, may be readily admitted. But when it is asserted that the self, which is believed to be of the nature of consciousness assuming the magnitude of the body it resides in, has a natural upward movement, and that as a result of the above practices it becomes free from connection with the body and the mind and rises higher and higher from this *ākāśa* to another *ākāśa*, the question becomes a philosophical one and cannot be solved without sufficient rational grounds.

How far asceticism is an effective and desirable spiritual practice is also a controversial question. This asceticism sometimes takes the form of long fasts, voluntary privations and sufferings and self-mortifications. Such practices may increase the power of enduring sorrows, but do not necessarily produce an attitude of indifference to all mundane concerns and a permanent blissful state of consciousness. It is generally believed that such ascetic practices produce moral merits by virtue of which the upward movement of the self is helped. This is also a theory, which cannot be

substantiated by any rational grounds. Moreover, merits as well as demerits, as admitted by the exponents of the view, keep the self within the domain of *Karma*. Hence even if merits accrue from these practices, how can they help the self to rise above the bondage of *Karma*? This objection may be raised with regard to the worship of the saints as well.

Thus we find that whenever any objective reference is sought to be imposed upon the religious practices of individual life, doubts, difficulties and inconsistencies arise, and there is no way out of them.

It is held by many thinkers that the self is essentially perfect in knowledge, power and bliss, but the perfection is veiled by the influence of *karma* in the worldly stage. But this is a mere supposition which cannot be rationally substantiated. If the self be essentially perfect, how can *karma* be associated with it and veil its true nature? *Karma* presupposes the connection of the self with the body and the mind, and this connection again presupposes *karma*. Thus it involves the fallacy of interdependence. If recourse is had to the beginninglessness of the *karma* and the bodily connection, it would imply the beginninglessness of the mundane state of the self, and how can the essential perfection of the self be proved? On the other hand, if this perfection is taken for granted, *karma* must be regarded as bringing the self down from the state of perfection to the state of bondage. In that case, there can be no security in the state of perfection attained through spiritual discipline, because *karma* may again drag it down to this world. If, again, the self be regarded as from eternity belonging to the domain of *karma*, how can it be expected to attain freedom of the bondage of *karma*? All its cognitions,

emotions, volitions and actions must be determined by *karma*, and none of them can then be expected to emancipate it from this eternal bondage. If the so-called perfection be regarded as the highest product of *Karma* itself, this perfection cannot be expected to be indestructible. Thus final emancipation from all kinds of bondage and limitation cannot be confidently hoped for.

It is held that in the various kinds of changing bodies through which an individual self passes in its mundane state, the sizes or forms of the self vary in accordance with the sizes or forms of the bodies, while it remains substantially the same through eternity, and that even when it passes from the mundane plane to the plane of liberation, its substantial character undergoes no change, though it cannot then have the size of any body. But what is the relation between the substance and the forms or sizes ? If the forms or sizes are identical with the substance of the self or pertain to its essential nature, the substance cannot remain the same, while the forms or sizes are changing. In that case there should be production of new selves and destruction of old selves every moment in the life of an animal. This is of course inadmissible according to the doctrine of permanent self. On the other hand, if the particular forms or sizes are different from the substance of the self and temporarily assumed by it, the self in its essential character must be regarded as formless and sizeless, and the forms or sizes must be regarded as ascribed to it through ignorance of its essential character. In that case it cannot be regarded as really occupying space either in the state of bondage or in the state of liberation. Hence the doctrine of its ascent from lower space to higher space, from mundane space to transcendent space, should also have no real significance.

III

(Expository)

There are others who think that all sorrows are ultimately due to false knowledge, which consists in the distorted understanding of what ought to be known and the ways of rightly knowing it. Therefore the right understanding of the ways of valid knowledge and the ultimate objects of knowledge is the surest means of emancipation from sorrow. Among the objects of knowledge, the self is of the greatest importance, and the true knowledge of the self is essential for getting rid of sorrow. Contemplation upon the true nature of the self as distinct from the body, the senses and the mind (*manas*) and as essentially free from the attributes and conditions which are attached to it through its connection with the mind, etc., leads to the intuition of this ultimate character of the self, and as the result the self becomes emancipated from its mundane existence, consisting of repeated births and deaths and the sorrows associated with them.

It is held that when false knowledge is destroyed by the true intuition of the self, attachment and aversion are thereby destroyed; as a consequence of this there should remain no motive for action, and in the absence of action and the merits and demerits arising from it, there should be no new birth, and hence there should be no possibility of sorrow.

(Critical)

Now, when the contemplation upon the self as free from all connections with the body, the senses and the mind, takes a deep root in the contemplative mind, it may give rise to the sense of a direct intuition of the self as such

a pure entity. But should it prove that the self is really such an entity and that there is a real non-sensuous perception of the self as such. What is called intuition here may be merely a peculiar state of the mind, in which such a consciousness arises, just as a different form of consciousness would arise if the self had been thought of and contemplated upon in a different way. So no objective reference of such contemplation or meditation can be demonstrated. If the self be in reality essentially connected with the body, etc., then also the aforesaid contemplation would result in the aforesaid intuition, just as if the self be essentially formless and attributeless, the contemplation of it as an embodied being with various attributes would give rise to a corresponding form of intuition.

Hence the question arises, how can such knowledge or such intuition be regarded as concerned with the true nature of the self and as affecting the real destiny of the self ? If it be said that the true nature of the self has been ascertained by the right application of the means of valid knowledge and that contemplation has been based on the conclusion arrived at by that process, then we have to fall back upon the logical correctness of the process and its conclusion, and we have discussed it elsewhere.

Then again, the advocates of this view hold that the connection between the self and the mind is real and not that the mental functions are falsely attributed to the self. If this be so, it is difficult to understand how the intuition of the self as an entity distinct from the mind etc., can sever this real connection and can put an end to attachment and aversion, actions and their fruits and births and rebirths, which are the effects of this connection. Thus the

possibility of the attainment of *moksha* or any permanent result as the result of such intuition is also open to question.

IV

(Expository)

According to another school of thought there are ultimately two self-existent Realities, viz. the Self and *Prakriti* (cosmic Energy), eternally joined to each other by what is called 'non-discrimination' (अविवेक). It is *Prakriti* which transforms itself step by step into a variety of subjective and objective phenomenal realities, and the self, which is essentially of the nature of pure changeless attributeless consciousness, does nothing at all and undergoes no modification whatsoever. By its mere presence the self illumines the evolutes of *Prakriti*, which being essentially non-conscious, cannot illumine themselves. But on account of the eternal conjunction due to non-discrimination between the self and *Prakriti*, the attributes of *Prakriti* and its evolutes, *i.e.* all changes and modifications, all distinctions of good and evil, all creations and destructions, all enjoyments and sufferings, etc , are ascribed to the self and they are regarded as the self's own. This is what the mundane existence of the self consists in, and such existence is felt to be full of sorrows, inner and outer. Accordingly, the non-discrimination of the self, from *Prakriti* and its transformations is the root-cause of all sorrows.

Hence in order to get rid of sorrows, what is demanded is the true knowledge of the self as absolutely distinct from *Prakriti* and all its worldly manifestations and the destruction thereby of the eternal conjunction of the self with *Prakriti*. The process of *Sādhanā*, therefore, consists

in the systematic discipline of the mind, the ego and the intelligence in order to prepare them suitably for the attainment of this true knowledge and finally in the contemplation and meditation of the true essential transcendent character of the self. The *Sádhaka* has to be convinced by rational reflection and to realise by contemplation and meditation that he, as the self, does nothing, feels nothing, enjoys and suffers nothing, has absolutely no concern with the worldly, bodily, sensuous, mental and egoistic phenomena and undergoes no change and modification, that he is eternally a changeless, attributeless, self-luminous entity, absolutely free from all joys and sorrows and that all kinds of phenomena experienced within as well as without belong to *Prakriti*. Having practised such reflection and contemplation, he should acquire an attitude of absolute indifference to *Prakriti* and all its manifestations. The result will be that the self will be discriminated and thereby separated from *Prakriti* and will attain its true essential character. As there are innumerable selves, each self has to attain emancipation by this process.

(Critical)

That the practice of such reflection and contemplation can create such an attitude in the mind of the *Sādhaka* and make him indifferent to the joys and sorrows of life needs no denial, because the mind learns to think and feel in the way in which it is trained to think and feel. That such an attitude produces an agreeable state of consciousness is also a fact of inner experience, that cannot be denied. But this is a subjective effect of a particular form of discipline, and it cannot thereby demonstrate the accuracy of the doctrine on which it is based.

First of all, it is a general law, accepted by the advocates of this theory as well, that the doer should reap the fruits of the deed, that the contemplator should enjoy the fruits of the contemplation. Now, when the *Sādhaka* practises the aforesaid reflection and contemplation, who is the real agent that does it ? Certainly not the self, which is regarded as without any such thought or feeling or action. It must be admitted that it is the intelligence or the intelligent ego that trains itself in this way. In that case this intelligence or the intelligent ego that ought to be separated from *Prakriti* and its products. But this is evidently impossible, because the intelligence and the ego are themselves regarded as the products of *Prakriti*. Thus the result that can rationally be admitted to follow from the *Sādhanā* is that the individual intelligence or ego may by practice imagine itself to be free from all mental and physical conditions and enjoy the peace of such imagined unaffected character of itself, without really being emancipated from the conditions naturally imposed upon them.

If it be said that the intelligence thinks, not of itself, but of the self as essentially free from connection with *Prakriti*, then the question would arise, can the self be an object of thought to intelligence ? The answer must be in the negative according to the advocates, because they hold that the self, being attributeless, can be neither the subject nor the object of thought. Even if it were possible for the intelligence to think of the self in its true character, it is difficult to understand how the bond of conjunction between the Self and *Prakriti*,—which is eternal, which was present even before the birth of intelligence and of which intelligence is a product,—can be destroyed as the result of the contemplation by intelligence of the freedom of the self from connection with *Prakriti*.

Again, the question may be asked,—what kind of discriminative knowledge is desirable? Whether it is of a general form or of a particular form? Of these, the knowledge of a general form is very easy to get. And to gain knowledge in a particular form is not possible. Moreover, the self being, according to the advocates, eternally inferable, its intuition is impossible. Its indirect knowledge exists even now, and it does not emancipate us from sorrow or bondage.

Advocate:—Though the self is, to the ordinary intelligence, only an object of inference, still the intuition of the self is possible to an intelligence purified and enlightened by the practice of '*yoga*'.

Critic:—The practice of meditation intensifies the *sádhaka's* conception of the object of meditation, and there is no proof that it creates any altogether new knowledge or that it can turn any entity, which is inherently not an object of perception, into an object of perception. (See pages 464–465). Further, meditation on and intuition of the inferred or supposed character of any entity cannot exercise any influence upon the original character of the entity in question. Accordingly the meditation and the intuition applied to the self cannot be expected to sever the eternal connection existing between the self and *Prakriti* and thus lead to emancipation from bondage. (For the examination of *Yoga-sádhaná* or samádhi-practice (See pages 209–217).

Moreover, according to the said advocates, there are two categories—*Puruṣa* and *Prakriti*. *Puruṣa* or the self is not an agent and *Prakriti* has the intrinsic nature of activity. Now, as selves are taken to be of a uniform

nature, nothing new can be assigned to them. The self is without action, so knowledge, will and effort are not recognised as taking place in it. And what is inactive cannot be the support of destiny (*adrista*) resulting from actions, nor can it be the experiencer of their results. As *Purușa* is not an agent, so even when discriminative knowledge arises, *Prakriti* cannot do anything for *Purușa.* And *Prakriti* which has the innate nature of activity can never be indifferent and inactive in relation to any *Purusa,* and hence the liberation of any *Purușa* would be impossible. It should not be asserted (as the advocates do)—that *Prakriti* ceases to become active when it realises that the purpose of its activity in relation to any *Purușa* has been fully served or when it finds that the *Purușa* has understood it in its reality and nakedness and when it learns that the *Purușa* has become indifferent to it,—because the attributeless *Purușa* has no purpose which can be served by *Prakriti,* nor can such a purpose, if ascribed to it, be realised completely in any period of time, nor can any *Purușa* be subject to change of states as attachment and indifference to *Prakriti,* nor is it possible for the inherently non-conscious *Prakriti* to arrive at any such knowledge. (For further refutation—See Critical Examination of *Jnána-Sádhaná*).

V.

KARMA-SĀDHANĀ.

(Expository.)

According to one class of recognised schools of religionists, *Sādhanā* consists chiefly in the performance of duties and virtuous actions. They think that the notion of 'ought' constitutes the essence of religion (*dharma*).

Accordingly religion is concerned with what we ought to do and what we ought not to do (विधि–निषेध). All men have got this consciousness of 'ought' and 'ought-not'. The essential character of man demands that he should refrain from doing what he *ought not* to do, even though he may feel strongly inclined to perform such actions owing to natural impulses and appetites and passions like lust, avarice, malice, fear, anger, etc., and that he should exert himself for doing what he *ought* to do, even though he may not naturally feel inclined to do such things. But how should we know what we ought to do and what we ought not to do? We cannot depend upon our own individual judgments nor upon the judgments of any other finite human beings for the ascertainment of our true duties, because the judgments of all finite beings are likely to be vitiated on account of their limitations of experience, imperfections of the powers of reasoning, mental propensities and prejudices etc. We can ascertain them from the Scriptures—the *Vedas*—which are the verbal embodiments of the eternal laws of 'ought' and 'ought-not', and which have come down to us from time immemorial by being transmitted from preceptors to disciples. The duties enjoined upon us by the Scriptures are generally of the nature of sacrifices (*jajna*), the essence of which lies in sacrificing what we possess for the sake of the ideal we seek to realise. The forms of the sacrifices may be of various types in accordance with our various capacities and internal and external circumstances (अधिकार) and the various ideals we may have in view (प्रयोजन).

Among the diverse kinds of duties enjoined by the Scriptures, there are many which are daily obligatory (*Nitya*) upon the people in accordance with their capacities and circumstances, there are others which become obligatory on particular occasions (*Naimittika*), and there are others still

which are optional, but which are required to be performed by persons desirous of attaining particular ends or ideals (*kàmya*), whether of this worldly life or of the otherworldly life. A man, by refraining from all kinds of prohibited actions (निषिद्ध कर्म) and by the proper performance of the daily and occasional duties, can shake off the impurities of the body, the senses and the mind and lead a pious life. But for the attainment of liberation it is also necessary that he should free his mind from the particular finite worldly and otherworldly ambitions and the actions enjoined as means to their fulfilment, and he should perform such highest kinds of sacrifices as can produce the highest good, viz. liberation.

But what is liberation? According to the thinkers of the main line representing this view-point, the self is a permanent substance essentially endowed with consciousness and bliss. But during its mundane existence, which has no beginning, it cannot realise and enjoy these glorious characteristics, on account of their being concealed or overshadowed by the bodily and mental impurities, the particular desires for and attachments to the finite objects of this or the other world, and the particular joys and sorrows arising as consequences of actions. Liberation accordingly consists in the destruction of these hindrances and the realisation of the eternally conscious and blissful character of the self in a supra-mundane or heavenly plane of existence. These hindrances can be destroyed by refraining from all prohibited or unrighteous actions as well as actions directed towards finite and transitory objects of desire, by the proper performance of the obligatory duties and by the performance of the highest type of sacrifices leading to self-realisation or the attainment of the state of immortal blissful consciousness.

(Critical.)

Now, we are here not concerned with the detailed examination of the validity of this theory of religious practice and its interpretation of various types of actions, nor of the efficacy of particular forms of sacrifices for producing particular kinds of results, nor of the justifiableness of the doctrine of the self referred to here. We need not raise any question here as to the reasonableness of the Scriptures—particularly the *Vedas*—being regarded as the *ultimate* and *eternal* sources of our knowledge of what we ought to do and what we ought not to do. Any attempt at a detailed criticism of these points would lead us far away from the topic of this section. (For the refutation of the eternity of the *Vedas* see pages 155–161.)

It must be generally admitted that the moral and spiritual life of man demands a restraint upon the desires and passions, a regulation and systematisation of the active life, the acceptance of certain types of actions as noble and virtuous and the rejection of certain types of actions as ignoble and vicious. This again demands a norm or standard by reference to which noble and virtuous actions can be distinguished from ignoble and vicious actions, good desires can be distinguished from evil desires, higher ends or ideals can be distinguished from lower ends or ideals. Men belonging to a particular community or country or age may be led to look upon a particular teacher or set of teachers, a particular book or series of books, a particular law or code of laws, as the final authority for setting up such norms or standards, and may, for the purpose of deepening the regard of the people in general for such authority, ascribe all sorts of glorious attributes to it. They may devise various plausible arguments for establishing the

infallibility of such authority. There is no gainsaying the fact that the regard for such accepted authority and the regulation of conduct and character in accordance with its teachings are found in many cases greatly beneficial to the systematisation, ennoblement and refinement of the individual and collective life of the people of particular societies, sects and ages. It is on the basis of such faith that much progress has been made in the human society and social solidarity established among individuals of diverse interests. But there is no rational ground for asserting that any particular scripture or teacher or code of laws has eternal and universal authoritativeness for setting up norms or standards for the regulation of the actions of all men of all ages and countries and communities or even of the men of the same community for all ages. Again, when any scriptural text or religious teacher asserts that the performance of some particular form of sacrifice or some noble virtuous deed will produce a desirable consequence, not in this life, but in some future state of existence, the belief in such an assertion may have the subjective value of creating a tendency to perform it, but cannot be regarded as having any objective rational ground to stand upon, unless the consequence can be verified. (For representation of *apurva* as advocated by this school and for its refutation see pages 670-672).

What we are particularly concerned with in this connection is to examine if the liberation of the self, as this theory conceives, can be attained by the practice of Vedic sacrifices or righteous deeds. Liberation is the realisation of perfect consciousness and blissfulness by the self in itself in some supramundane plane of existence. If this liberation is the product of virtuous actions, this consciousness and blissfulness cannot be regarded as pertaining to the eternal

nature of the self and they must be regarded as attributes or elements produced in the self. In that case, either these elements or attributes, being produced, should be somehow related to the self without affecting its essential nature, or they should transform the very nature of the self. If the former alternative be true, then the self cannot be regarded as being perfectly and permanently liberated from the mundane existence, because like all other agreeable and disagreeable experiences obtained by the self as the results of various kinds of actions in this mundane existence, the experience of this blissful consciousness is attained by it as a result of some particular types of actions, and like all other results of actions this result also must be exhausted through enjoyment. There would be no ground for holding that this particular product of a particular type of actions should not participate in the nature of the other products of the other types of virtuous actions. If the other alternative be accepted, *i. e.* if the production of 'these consequences be supposed to transform the nature of the self, then the self is to be regarded as a transformable substance (विकारी). In that case, the fundamental conception of the nature of the self would be contradicted, and liberation also being one of the transformations of the self produced by actions must like the other transformations be transitory.

Thus liberation cannot be consistently conceived as the prodnct of virtuous actions. What the systematic performance of virtuous actions can accomplish is only to remove the hindrances in the way of the realisation of the perfect consciousness and blissfulness which are eternally inherent in the nature of the self. If this interpretation be accepted, then the immediate cause of liberation is not virtuous action, but true knowledge of the nature of the self. Virtuous action is then only a subsidiary cause, preparing

the mind for the attainment of fitness to acquire the knowledge. Hence many advocates of *Karma-Sādhanā* admit that *Karma* alone cannot give liberation, the combination of true knowledge and virtuous action (*Jnanakarmasamuccaya*) is necessary for it. But this doctrine also is difficult to establish logically. First, if perfect consciousness and blissfulness constitute the real eternal character of the self, then what we experience as mundane existence must be due to ignorance and therefore illusory; accordingly, the actions and the sweet and bitter experiences of the selves, the *law of karma* and the entire world of diversities should have to be regarded as illusory. This is however not accepted by the exponents of this view, and its acceptance would lay the axe at the root of their emphasis on the importance of Vedic *karma* and the combination of knowledge and action. Secondly, if virtuous actions are necessary only for paving the way to knowledge by the removal of hindrances, then this cannot be reasonably regarded as समुच्चय or combination of knowledge and action. Knowledge alone being the cause of the destruction of ignorance, it must be regarded as the true cause of liberation, and hence *Sādhanā* must principally consist in the culture of true knowledge of the self, and not in the performance of virtuous actions. Thirdly, the necessity for the performance of virtuous actions even as a step to and preparation for the culture of true knowledge cannot be established. Knowledge, being an intellectual affair, can be cultured independently of the habit of performing actions. There are countless examples of extraordinary intellectual achievements without any notable virtuous or Vedic *karma*. Hence how can any invariable relation between good *karma* and true *fnāna* be established ?

Among the advocates of *karma* as the principal *Sādhanā* of life there are others again who hold that *karma* does not

mean necessarily the actions enjoined in the *Vedas* or Scriptures. All the duties of all the spheres of our life constitute our *karma*. It is asserted that if our active life is guided by the pure sense of duty, and not by any passion or prejudice or any yearning for particular objects of this life or any future life, if without any motive of worldly gain or sensuous enjoyment or power and prestige in the society we devote our time and energy to the due performance of duties, which are demanded from us by our particular positions in the family, the community, the state and the humanity and by our mental and physical equipments, then the *Law of karma* cannot bind us down to this mundane existence, the hindrances to self-realisation automatically vanish, the blissful consciousness of the self unveils itself and thus liberation is attained.

This conception of duty for duty's sake is of course a grand and beautiful ideal for the guidance of our practical life. There is no doubt that this ideal, if deep-rooted in the mind, sweetens our individual, domestic and social life, enables us to conquer many of the sources of misery and disharmony and tends to the identification of the individual and the social good. But how can it be rationally maintained that, simply because the actions are performed from a sense of duty without any desire to gain particular consequences for the worker himself, they will not actually produce any such consequences and bind down the man for enjoying them ? If the *Law of karma* has any truth in it, the actions, by whomsoever performed, must produce their sweet or bitter results, and must therefore lead to bondage and suffering. Therefore such desireless work also cannot be the means to liberation. Moreover, is it possible to perform duties for their own sake without any desire or motive to attain some good end ? The very distinction between

duties and sins arises from the consciousness of some ends considered as good to be attained by the former as distinguished from other ends considered as bad to be obtained by the latter. The vanishing of the desirable and undesirable ends or objects would lead to the disappearance to duty itself. Even if the performance of duty for duty's sake were possible, it cannot be established that the desireless state of the mind would be permanent and the liberation would be for good.

VI

BHAKTI-SĀDHANĀ

(Expository)

According to a good many religious systems, *Sādhanā* consists mainly in the devoted worship of God, and all forms of physical, mental and intellectual discipline must be subordinate to it. There is unanimity among them in the conception of God as the omnipotent and omniscient Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of this phenomenal world, including the diverse kinds of conscious and unconscious beings, though there are important points of difference with regard to the ultimate nature of God, the self and the world and their mutual relations. The selves in their mundane existence are absolutely dependent upon and governed by the power of God, and it is upon His mercy that they have to depend for deliverance from bondage and sorrow. So long as the embodied selves are guided by egoism and the egoistic thoughts, feelings and impulses, moved by attachments and aversions to the worldly objects, and engaged in worldward progress, they remain under the bondage of *Karma* and suffer various kinds of miseries. The most effective means of emancipation from *Karma* and

misery is to surrender the egoism to God, to look upon all worldly phenomena as the works of God, to think of God as the supremely righteous, benevolent and loving Governor of the world, to submit to His dispensations with a faithful and devoted heart, to culture the feelings of reverence, admiration and love towards Him and to practise contemplation of and meditation on Him more and more deeply so that there may be direct communion with Him. Through the intensification of this worshipful mentality, the self becomes free from all worldly influences, attains unity with or proximity of God, and is delivered from the bondage of *Karma* and the sorrows of mundane existence.

This *Bhakti-Sādhanā* has assumed various forms among the different religious sects of the world. Some conceive of God as a formless personal Being dwelling in Heaven or some such supra-mundane region, which is regarded as the abode of good without evil, happiness without sorrow, love without hatred, etc. They offer worship to this formless God in the forms of prayer, contemplation, loyal submissiveness to His dispensations, glorification of His character and the culture of a reverential attitude. Others think of God as a formless personal Being, pervading the entire universe, revealing Himself as the Self of all selves. They also offer worship to God in the above forms, and try to realise Him within and without, to see God everywhere and in all things, to see His *leela* or play in all phenomena, and to submerge their individuality in the blissful and loving thought of Him in meditation.

Others again conceive God as an embodied Being,—an incarnation of Beauty and Sublimity. His body, however, is considered to be not made up of earthly

elements like the bodies of men and animals, and therefore not confined to any particular portion of space and not subject to decay and death. His body is spiritual and He is present everywhere and always. When the mind is sufficiently purified by moral practices and devoted worship to Him, and the devotee eagerly prays for His self-revelation, He becomes visible to him. *Sādhanā*, therefore, consists in the preparation of the mind through moral discipline, repetition of any chosen name of God and constant thought of Him with a prayerful attitude, meditation on His form and glory, and so on.

Among those who worship God as an embodied Being, there are again differences of views with regard to His essential nature. There are many who think that God is essentially a formless Spirit, above time and space, without any specific body and specific attributes; but He reveals Himself in various forms with particular bodies and special attributes for the good of the devotees, who are thereby attracted towards Him and enabled to form definite conception of and offer worship to Him. Hence it is held that through the worship of all these forms, the different sects of devotees really worship the same God and obtain their desired end from Him according to the purity of their hearts and strength of their devotion. Others again assert that God has one definite form which is perfect, while the other forms are only partial and imperfect manifestations of that form. Among them the devotees of each particular sect think that the form which they worship as God is the real perfect form of God, while the forms worshipped by all other sects are imperfect.

These worshippers worship God not only in the form which they consider as specifically divine, but also in the

forms of different deities and of those extraordinary historical personalities who are believed to be prophets or special incarnations of God. The particular devotees are found to worship Him also in the forms of their own spiritual guides, in whom, according to their view-point, the Divine Grace manifests itself for guiding them to the ultimate goal of their life. In order to help their conception of the specific forms in which they worship God and to aid the concentration of their mind upon those forms, they not unoften construct images of them with earth or stone or other materials, look upon them as living bodies of their object of worship actually present before them, offer flowers, food-articles and other enjoyable materials as tokens of their devotion, and having thus concentrated their attention upon their object of worship, they try to ascend step by step to the subtler and subtler conception of God and to meditate on Him.

Further, as it is generally experienced that the feelings of love, reverence, affection and interest of men are directed towards other men on the strength of some intimate relationships, such as parenthood and childhood, husbandhood and wifehood, masterhood and servanthood, teachership and discipleship, etc., the worshippers seek to take advantage of this normal nature of the human mind and to conceive of some such intimate relationship with God. Accordingly God is looked upon by the particular devotees as father or mother, husband or friend, master or preceptor, son or daughter, and so on, and they try to intensify the corresponding sentiments towards Him by means of constant contemplation of Him as so closely related to themselves. They think that as their hearts become more and more attached to God in this way, the worldly attachments gradually disapper, the bondage of *Karma*

becomes slackened, their spiritual character is developed and they approach nearer and nearer to the transcendent spiritual nature of God and ultimately they become united with God. As to what the true nature of this union is, it depends upon the ultimate nature of God and the self, and in this matter there is a variety of philosophical views even among the exponents of *Bhakti-Sādhanā*.

(Critical.)

In our critical examination of this line of religious self-discipline, we are not directly concerned with its psychological and moral consequences on the life of the individual devotees or on the collective life of the society. It must be admitted by everybody that the body, the senses and the mind may be systematically disciplined in pursuit of any cherished imaginary ideal. Though the ideal may be imaginary and incapable of being realised through any amount of persistent effort, the discipline that is practised for its realisation would be an undeniable fact of experience and it is sure to produce some effects upon the life of the individual and the society in accordance with the psychological and moral laws. That *Bhakti-Sādhanā*, if sincerely practised, creates a sweetness and tenderness of heart, a spirit of love and reverence, a tendency to sacrifice the worldly enjoyments for the sake of the ideal, an attitude of friendliness and service towards the fellow-beings, a control over the natural impulses, feelings and desires, a one-pointedness of the mind, and so on, nobody can deny. The society also may be greatly benefited by such training of the individuals. This *Sādhanā*, if it is systematically pursued to the end and if it can take hold of the entire mind, may lead to a psychological state, in which there may be a *consciousness* of a direct vision and touch of and personal intercourse with God, a *sense* of

union or communion with God, an *outlook* on the world as the expression of His *Leela*, and so on. If the followers of these religious systems claim so far for the efficacy of their *Sādhanā*, there need be no dispute over the claim.

But when they assert that God, as the ultimate noumenal Reality, the real Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the world, the all-transcending and all-pervading omnipotent and omniscient Personality, becomes Himself the object of their contemplation and meditation, accepts their worship and service and offerings, listens to their prayers and songs of praise, appears before them and communicates with them, and makes them the participators of the beauty and sublimity and bliss of His transcendent nature, they transgress the sphere of their legitimate claims and become objects of rational criticism.

Such claims might have some plausible grounds, if the illustrious teachers of this Bhakti-cult had been unanimous in their conception of God and the state of liberation. But what we actually find is that those teachers, who are regarded as having attained union with God and some of whom are even revered and worshipped as incarnations of God, widely differ in their expositions of the ultimate nature of God and the nature of the union with God. It is obvious that all these conflicting views cannot be accepted as equally representing the true nature of that self-existent Reality and the ultimate condition attained by the self at the time of its union with God.

It is sometimes argued that though there are apparent conflicts among the characterisations of God, the self and the highest ideal by the different God-loving and God-knowing founders and teachers of the different schools of Bhakti-cult,

there is an inner harmony among them. It is said that they all have experienced the same God and attained the same ideal, but have explained their experiences in different forms of language. This justification of the objective validity of their spiritual experiences might have been acceptable, if the authoritative interpreters and advocates of their teachings, instead of quarrelling with one another and making all possible attempts to refute one anothers' conceptions, had accepted the views of all those teachers and found out the ground of harmony among them. But the numerous writings of the greatest thoughtful devotees of each sect bear ample evidence to the fact that they regarded only the intuitions of their own masters as objectively valid and those of all other masters of all other sects as merely subjective and erroneous or as representing only partial aspects of the objective truth or as indicating lower stages of the development of the mind. Such conflicts are sufficient evidences to prove that in reality the God-vision, the intercourse with God, God's revelation of the truths about Himself, the feeling of unity with Him, etc. etc. are all subjective experiences of the devotees obtained in accordance with their respective modes of worship and meditation and not unoften in accordance with their preconceptions and predispositions, and that they have no valid reference to objective Reality.

Let us now consider in brief the possibility of actual contact between the devotee and God. It is to be remembered that we do not bring the metaphysical problem of the existence of God into question here. The grounds for the establishment of God's existenee and for the determination of His nature and His relation to the world, if He exists, have been elaborately dealt with in the preceding chapters. Here we assume that God exists and that He is of the particular

nature which is attributed to Him by the devotees of the particular schools. Hence the question here is,—is it possible for the devotees to come face to face with or directly experience God, as they conceive Him to be in and by Himself?

We have found that one school of devotees thinks Him to be a formless Being residing in some supramundane region of bliss. They may very well think that a supreme Being devoid of all specific bodily forms exists and that such a Being is the source and ruler of the world of experience and that He resides in some distant region in which all that is desirable to them is naturally present. If the life's interests can be centred in such a Being, whether real or imaginary, some desirable psychological and moral effects must be produced. But is it a definite conception of God? Can such a formless Being be actually pictured in the mind and contemplated upon? To think of the existence of a Reality and to think of that Reality as actually present as an object before the mind's eye must be admitted to be different from each other. Even if the idea of that formless Reality is objectified and meditated upon and the mind is so absorbed in such meditation that no other thought arises in it, does it imply that the Reality itself comes down from the supramundane region and becomes present before the mind? The answers to these questions must be in the negative. First, the conception of God must be coloured and conditiond by the character of the mind of the devotee; secondly, God conceived as a formless Being dwelling in a distant region cannot be made a direct object of meditation; thirdly, there cannot be any direct contact between such a Being and thinking mind. Hence the God-realisation in this case must be regarded as a subjective state of consciousness having no real objective reference. However deep the

apparent experience of the object of meditation may be and however strong the conviction of its reality may be in the mind of the devotee, this experience and conviction can be no ground for the objective validity of the experience, because there is no relation of concomitance between thought and the real existence of its object. If it were found in our normal experience that whatever is an object of intense thought or whatever appears as an object of the internal experience of the mind, inevitably exists as an extramental reality as well, then only such conclusion of the objective reality of the contents of meditation could be arrived at. But in constructive imaginations, in reveries and dreams, in cases of hypnotism and hallucination, men are found to think intensely of objects and even to experience them directly, though the objects have got no real existence or the things thought of do not really appear before them. Further, the thing which is conceived in thought as existent can also be thought of as non-existent. Self-consistency and not objective existence is the essence of thought. An object of thought may thus be real or false or doubtful. As long as the real existence of the object of thought is not established, the objective reference of thought remains unascertained. The thing which exists may be thought of, but it is impossible to assert that whatever is thought of or even imagined to be experienced within the mind must have also real existence independent of that thought. Moreover, there is no reasonable ground for inferring that the attainment of such a state of consciousness would be followed after death by the ascent of the self of the devotee to the divine region of peace and bliss.

The same remarks are equally applicable to the *sādhanā* and the experiences of those, who conceive of God as an all-pervading Being. An all-pervading entity, though accepted as real, can be thought of in a general way, but

cannot be made a specific definite object of contemplation and meditation. As soon as the attempt is made to objectify it, its all-pervading nature is lost, because the thinking mind becomes the subject and that entity, being its object, becomes limited by it. Moreover, the feeling of love is the most essential factor in *Bhakti-Sādhanā* ; such a feeling cannot be cultured except in relation to a person, that person being differentiated from the devotee's own self. If God is conceived as all-pervading, the culture of love and worship of Him becomes impracticable. Hence for the practical purpose of *sādhanā*, God has to be loved, worshipped and contemplated upon as a limited, though supremely great, Personality. It is also a highly controversial question, whether a Being, that is regarded as infinite and all-pervading, can also be conceived as a Person. If Personality is abandoned, the *Bhakti-sādhanā* is gone ; if the infinity and all-pervadingness are abandoned, God becomes a finite Being, limited in space, and therefore cannot be accepted, according to this school, as the highest object of worship. But these two aspects of their conception of God appear to contradict each other. Even if there be any metaphysical justification for this conception, the actual contemplation and meditation of God in strict accordance with this conception becomes impracticable.*

* Er sieht die Gefahren des Gebets in der Heuchelei ; „denn der Mensch mag nun laut beten oder seine Ideen innerlich in Worte auflosen, so stellt er sich die Gottheit als etwas vor, das den Sinnen gegeben werden kann, da sie doch bloss ein Prinzip ist, das seine Vernunft ihn anzunehmen Zwingt "

(Rudolf Kaysers Kant)

To put it in English :—He (Kant) sees the dangers of prayer in hypocrisy " for a man may pray either aloud or express his ideas inwardly in words. Thus he represents Divinity as something that can be given to the senses while Divinity is a mere principle which his reason constrains him to assume. "

(Rudolf Kayser's " Kant.")

Supposing such meditation is possible, what is the result ? As God is all-pervading and the Self of all selves, all creatures are always in touch with God,—God is always attained by all. So *sādhanā* would be needless, if the attainment of God be regarded as its ideal ; and it would be useless in emancipating man from bondage and sorrow. If it be said that the ideal is the direct conscious experience of God as the infinite all-pervading Personality and of the self as existing in, for and by God, then this conscious experience itself would create a difference between God and the experiencing mind, and would make such experience of the all-pervading infinite nature of God impossible. If the individuality of the mind is lost, then experience itself would be impossible. If however some sort of mystic experience is obtained, the mind must be there and there can be no certainty that the result of such experience would be perpetual.

Let us now consider the position of those who worship God as an embodied Being. The metaphysical difficulties connected with the conception of God as essentially an embodied Being or a bodiless Being assuming diverse forms have been discussed elsewhere. Here we are to consider the sādhanā-aspect of this conception. It has been found that the worshippers of God as an embodied Person may be divided principally into two classes,—viz. those who regard Him as essentially a bodiless Spirit assuming diverse bodily forms for the good of the devotees and those who regard Him as eternally having a particular bodily form, though sometimes appearing in other secondary forms as well. Let us examine the position of these two classes separately.

If God is essentially a bodiless Spirit assuming different forms for the worship of the devotees of different mentalities,

then these forms must be distinguished from the true self of God. In that case the worship of any particular form cannot be regarded as the true worship of God Himself. It may be legitimately argued that it is not the forms that are worshipped as distinguished from God, but that it is God who is worshipped in these forms. This is quite true. But the question is: when the devotees worship God in these froms, do they contemplate God as conditioned by these forms and the attributes associated with them or do they think of Him as unconditioned by those forms and attributes ? If the former, then God as conditioned by one form and its associated attributes must be distinguished from God as conditioned by another form and its associated attributes. This therefore leads to the idea of a plurality of Gods,—different classes of devotees worshipping different Gods. In fact, it is such ideas of numerous conditioned Gods, indicated by different particular names and forms and attributes, and worshipped in accordance with different specific rules and *mantras* and rituals prescribed by the scriptures, that have divided the God-worshippers into numerous sectarian groups, created a narrowness in their outlook and not unoften given rise to bitter quarrels among them. However, it must be evident to every rational mind that the worship of such a conditioned God is radically different from the worship of God, who is above all names and forms, above space and time, above all limitations and qualifications, and who is infinite and eternal, nameless and formless, omnipotent and omniscient, Supreme Spirit. The worship of any particular conditioned God may be considered to be efficacious in disciplining the body and the mind, diverting the mind from the sensuous worldly interests to ideal spiritual interests and leading it to higher and higher planes of thought, feeling and will. But such worship

cannot be regarded as the worship of Ultimate Reality. If this is admitted, as it ought reasonably to be admitted, then a separate type of worship, viz. the contemplating and meditating worship of the formless all-pervading God, must be regarded as necessary for the attainment of what the devotees regard as the highest ideal of life and the emancipation from bondage and sorrow. But the difficulties that are connected with this type of worship and the objections against its objective reference have already been discussed.

If, on the other hand, even at the time of worshipping God in the forms, God is contemplated as distinct from and unconditioned by the names and forms, then the modes of worship that are associated with those names and forms should lose their importance and the meditation on the unconditioned essence of God should be regarded as the true worship. But here also the doubts and difficulties mentioned before are insurmountable.

The observations made above are equally applicable to the worship of all kinds of forms, whether the forms are regarded as specifically divine, or they are the forms of distinct deities or *avatārs* or prophets or *Gurus*. In each case, either the form is to be contemplated as God particularised and conditioned, or God should be thought of as distinct from and unconditioned by it. Hence in none of such types of worship is there any way out of the difficulties mentioned above. (For the examination of God-vision see pages 162–176.)

Let us now pass to the views of those who regard God as eternally possessed of some perfect bodily form. It is inevitable that different groups of devotees with different mentalities should differ in their conceptions about the true

nature of the bodily form of God, because their ideas about what constitutes the perfection of the bodily form should vary. The ideas of beauty and sublimity with regard to the bodily constitution are not uniform in all men. Again, some should lay greater stress on beauty and some on grandeur. Some should regard Him as with a perfect human form, some with a form far more magnificent than a human being can possibly possess. Some should conceive Him as two-handed, some as hundred-handed, some as thousand-handed and so on. Some should think that He has ultimately a female body,—a body of an ideal mother, and others should think that He must have ultimately a male body In this way, various conceptions about the ultimate character of the bodily form of God have been and are being cherished by different groups of devotees, who believe that God is essentially an embodied Person. Certainly their conceptions contradict each other, and none of them can be acceptable without rational grounds. That the devotees, as a result of their contemplation, are blessed with the visions of such bodily forms of their Divine object of worship, cannot evidently be a ground for the acceptance of any of these forms as constituting the true nature of the Divine body, because the devotees belonging to all such groups can bear witness to such visions and they are the objectifications of the mental images cherished and contemplated on by the particular classes of worshippers.

Let us then consider if God can rationally be conceived as possessed of any eternal bodily form. It is the essential nature of a bodily form to limit the embodied being to a particular portion of space. The conception of a body without reference to spatial relations is impossible. If, then, God is confined to any particular portion of space and is thus separated from all other embodied beings, He cannot certainly

be regarded as infinite and all-pervading. Moreover, a body implies a plurality of parts, which, though organically related, must be distinguished from each other. If God be conceived as an embodied Being, He must be either identified with the body or differentiated from it. If identified with the body, God must be regarded as made up of parts and therefore of the nature of an aggregate. This is of course absurd. If God is regarded as the self of the body and therefore distinguished from it, either he should be conditioned by and dependent upon the body for performing His divine functions, or He should be unconditioned and independent of it. In the former case, He should be regarded as under bondage and limitations like any other *Jeeva* or finite self; in the latter case, the body is not essentially related to Him and He cannot be said to be essentially an embodied Being.

Moreover, if God be conceived as an embodied Being, it is the mental image of that God which becomes the real object of contemplation, and it is the vivid experience of this image in deep meditation which is construed as the self-revelation of God in the presence of the devotee. It may have this spiritual value to the devotee that his mind has been concentrated upon and absorbed in the thought of the cherished and beloved object of his worship, his outlook on life and the world has radically changed and he has learnt to view all things as the expressions of the divine will and thereby he has dissociated himself from the worldly concerns, which used to create various troubles and anxieties in his life. But there is no reasonable ground to assert that God Himself has become visible to him and accepted him as His own, nor is there any ground to assert that the devotee, should, after death, be endowed with a spiritual body, taken to the presence of God and allowed to enjoy an eternal blissful existence along with God.

Thus we are bound to conclude that though *Bhakti-sādhanā*, if sincerely practised, has its subjective utility, there is no rational proof of its objective reference.

APPENDIX H

The Doctrine of Avatāra

The doctrine of *Avatâra* or the *Descent* of God and His incarnation in particular forms into the world is found in some form or other in almost all the theistic religions of the world, in which personality of God, whether with or without form, is believed in and He is conceived as the Creator and Ruler of the universe. As the conscious beings are believed to have within their innermost nature an inherent demand for union with God, without which they cannot attain liberation from bondage and sorrow, so God also is conceived to have in His nature a love and mercy for the conscious beings suffering from bondage and sorrow and yearning for liberation. The yearning of the conscious beings, especially of the self-conscious and self-determining beings like men, for attaining liberation finds expression in spiritual discipline, which essentially consists in their *ascent* to higher and higher planes of spiritual consciousness for perfect union with the Supreme Spirit. Correspondingly the love and mercy of God for these finite creatures finds expression in His *avatāra* or occasional *descent* into this objective world of ordinary sensuous experience for the purpose of awakening the dormant yearning of their inner-self for union with Himself, revealing to them the true path of ascent to Himself, setting before them an example of higher spiritual life, strengthening the spiritual forces of the world and removing or weakening the devilish forces which put obstacles in the way of the development of spiritual outlook in the society of living beings and which seek to destroy the order and harmony of the world-system.

God is conceived as the Creator, the Sustainer and the Regulator of this beginningless and endless world-system, and as such He may legitimately be held to be the originator of the bondage, imperfection and sorrow of the conscious

creatures placed within this system. Hence it can be reasonably supposed that if God Himself had not mercifully equipped these creatures with suitable moral and spiritual resources and placed them under favourable environmental circumstances, they could never hope to get rid of this bondage, imperfection and sorrow and to attain a blissful state of self-consciousness, freedom and perfection. The very possibility of liberation accordingly implies the mercy of God and His bestowal of suitable resources and circumstances upon the living creatures. Of all living creatures man alone is endowed with a self-conscious and self-determining nature. The upward movement and the evolution of character of all other creatures are accomplished by God Himself from behind the scene through suitable contrivances without any conscious and self-determined systematic effort on their part. But the self-conscious and self-determining character of human beings has to develop itself and rise upward through systematic self-chosen and self-regulated endeavours, and for their spiritual advancement and ultimate liberation God is required to reveal Himself in the world of their experience. In order that their endeavours may be pushed in the right direction, God Himself comes down and manifests Himself in suitable forms as their friend and guide for enlightening and directing their intelligence and will, for attracting their mind towards the unique glories of His beautiful and blissful character and for making the environments favourable for the emancipation of their spiritual nature from the anti-spiritual forces in the midst of which He has placed them.

It is further held that the world-system is so designed by its Creator that there is within it an eternal war between good and evil, between centripetal or Godward forces and centrifugal or anti-Godward forces, between *Devas* and *asuras*, between the forces of harmony and the forces of disharmony, between the forces that tend towards peace, love, beauty and bliss and the forces that tend towards disorder,

antagonism, ugliness and suffering. This war is perceptible in individual life as well as in collective life of mankind and even in the cosmic life of the world. In course of this struggle immanent in the very constitution of the phenomenal universe, though generally the former triumph over the latter and thereby the order and adjustment of the system is preserved, there are periods when the latter become more powerful than the former and threaten to destroy the order and harmony and unity of the great system of the universe and to shake the moral and spiritual foundation of this system. Since the human society is naturally conceived by the self-conscious human thinkers as occupying the central position in this world-order and since the objective world of human experience is supposed to be organically related to the society of human spirits as the field of their self-expression, self-realisation, enjoyment and suffering, the view-points and ideals which become predominant in the human society and exercise governing influence upon the mental outlook as well as upon the individual and social, political and economic, moral and religious conduct of the most important and powerful sections of the human race are regarded as the surest indications of the kind of forces prevailing and triumphing in the world-system at any particular period. Accordingly when in the human society materialistic ambition appears to be much more powerful than the moral and spiritual ideal and becomes the guiding principle of human conduct in private as well as in public life, when selfishness, competition, rivalry, jealousy, hostility, etc., suppress the superior claims of love, benevolence, friendliness, service and sacrifice, when the forces which disorganise the society become more prevalent than those which unify the hearts and interests of the individuals and identify individual good with collective good, it is to be inferred that the forces of evil and destruction,—the centrifugal or *āsuric* forces,—have got the upper hand in the world-system.

According to the divine plan underlying the world-system, it is in such critical and perplexing periods of the history of the human race and the cosmic process, that the omnipotent omniscient and merciful Creator and Ruler of the universe makes a special manifestation of Himself in this world and a special revelation of His all-transcending all-governing all-harmonising glorious powers to the human intelligence, so that the human society may again be more spiritually-minded, the centripetal or Godward forces may again be more predominant than the centrifugal or *āsuric* forces, the forces of peace, love, harmony and unity may again attain supremacy over the forces of rivalry, hostility, disorder and mutual destruction. These crises also are of course the creations of God, and God Himself comes down to deliver the cosmic order from them. God seems, in His creative design, to have left room for His personal intervention on particular occasions, and for making Himself more directly known to His rational creatures through such intervention.

The history of the development of the human society also, so far as known, bears witness to the fact that in course of its progress there arise periodically in different parts of the world such critical and intricate situations that the problems originating in them puzzle and perplex the intelligence of even the best and ablest of the ordinary human beings and baffle all their sincerest attempts at their satisfactory solution. It also bears witness to a peculiar phenomenon, viz. that in such apparently baffling situations there are almost invariably born in the human race individuals of super-ordinary types, who are specially gifted with the genius for offering the right solution of those perplexing problems, the magnetic personality for attracting and organising the people round about them, the irresistible power for enforcing their solution upon the life of the race and for giving a new mould to the thoughts, feelings and desires of generations of men. These supermen may rightly be regarded as the special manifestations of the Divine

Power and even as the special embodiments of the Divine Personality. Their followers actually see God in them and preach them as God in human forms.

Such are the grounds on which the believers in the merciful personality of God form their conception of *avatāra.* The questions as to why God creates such periodical crises and then comes down to solve them through special manifestations of His unique power and wisdom, why in His cosmic plan He has left room for the growth of forces which threaten to destroy the harmony of this world-process and for the necessity of His special intervention to subdue these forces, why in His original design He had not exercised His omnipotence and omniscience in such a way as to produce a perpetually uniform and indisturbably harmonious system of the universe, etc., are regarded as irrelevant in this connection. The human reason can only seek to understand and explain the world-process as it is, but can never question and understand why it is so and not otherwise. Moreover, such questions involve an obvious self-contradiction, in as much as they would mean that God, who is conceived as the sole ultimate Cause and Ground of the universe, must have been impelled by some other causes, internal or external to Himself, to create a world-order of a particular nature in preference to worlds of other possible natures. The question of why or wherefore cannot consistently arise with regard to the sole ultimate Cause. God accordingly cannot be thought of as actuated by any motive or impelled by any special reason or governed by any law or power or conditioned by any destiny of the finite spirits, in originating a world-system of such a character and governing it in accordance with such laws. The human reason can only attempt to understand the character of the world-system which has been actually produced by God and to get an insight into the operations of the laws according to which God is actually regulating its course. It is through such understanding that the human reason can form a

conception about *how* the Causality of God is manifested in the effects, but not about *why* He produces such effects. Even in the field of our direct observation we can never understand *why* a certain volume of a gas of a particular kind being chemically combined with a certain volume of a gas of another particular kind produces a certain compound substance with certain new properties and not something else, *why* a certain quantity of a certain drug being applied in a certain way to a human body suffering from a particular disease destroys the germs or bacilli of that disease within the body, or even *why* a particular article tastes sweet and another tastes bitter. Thus it is useless and irrational to ask *why* the ultimate Cause of this world has produced such a world, in which there are periodical prevalences of forces of disorder and there are special self-manifestations of the power of that Cause on those occasions That such occasions in the phenomenal world and such occasional self-revelations of God are not inconsistent with the nature of the world-system and of God our reason can understand and that they actually occur we can experience. Thus it is held that the doctrine of *avatāra* is not philosophically inconsistent with the true conception of God and the world and that it can furnish a satisfactory explanation for the periodical crises and the appearance of exceptionally wise and powerful personalities for overcoming them.

The nature of *avatāra* in relation to God is, however, differently explained by different schools of religious thought. According to some schools, God Himself assumes particular bodily forms and manifests Himself as particular embodied beings on particular critical occasions. It is of course quite evident that these particular embodied beings appear at particular times in particular places, perform particular kinds of actions and offer solutions of particular kinds of problems. They are thus limited in time and space, they are finite in their nature, they exhibit in their life limited knowledge and power, their actions and feelings are

conditioned by the circumstances in which they live and move, they are existentially distinct from all other creatures. Here many questions may arise: How can all these be consistent with the conception of God? How can the infinite eternal unconditioned absolute Being become born as a finite conditioned related creature on earth? How can the Being, who is above time and space and upon whom the existence of time and space depends, appear as a particular creature confined within particular portions of time and space without losing His essential character? How can the Being, who is the sole support of all power and knowledge, require efforts and contrivances for the performance of particular activities and for the solution of particular problems, as are evident in the lives of these particular *avatāras*? How can the eternally blissful Being be subjected to sorrows and troubles, as are found in the lives of all such personalities, however extraordinarily wise and powerful they may be? Moreover, even if it be imagined that God may occasionally be born as a particular creature in a particular place, does it not imply that the rest of the universe exists without God— i. e. without being sustained and supported and regulated by the presence of God?

The reply of the exponents of the direct *avatāra* of God to such questions is that all questions of this type arise from gross misunderstanding about the nature of God and His *avatāra*. God, conceived as the sole Ground and Cause of the phenomenal universe,—the non-dual self-determining self-existent free Creator and Sustainer and Regulator of the countless plurality of living and non-living beings,—is necessarily infinite and eternal, unconditioned and absolute, omnipotent and omniscient, perfectly self-conscious and self-fulfilled and blissful. He is eternally immanent in and transcendent above the phenomenal existences, constituting the universe. His creation of the world of plurality does not mean the production of new entities outside of Himself and the consequent limitation of His own existence. His

creation means His self-manifestation in time and space,—the manifestation of His infinite and eternal existence in the forms of innumerable finite and transitory phenomenal existences, the manifestation of His absolute unconditioned power in the forms of various kinds of relative and conditioned powers, the manifestation of His perfect unobstructed effortless knowledge and bliss in the forms of diverse orders of imperfect obstructed and acquired phenomenal knowledge and enjoyment. But inspite of and in the midst of all these self-manifestations, God in His transcendent nature exists as the eternally changeless and effortless and perfect Being, and in relation to them He is eternally their creator and sustainer and regulator and destroyer and all of them exist by Him, in Him and for Him. All the struggles and co-operations of the forces, all the efforts and their successes and failures, all the imperfctions and the attempts to rise above them, all the distinctions of good and evil, virtue and vice, bondage and liberation, *Daiva* and *āsuric* powers, etc., are within His creation, within the phenomenal world of His self-manifestations, and not in Him, not in His pure supra-mundane nature.

Now, just as the existence of this phenomenal world is not incompatible with the existence of His pure Divine nature, so what is called *avatāra* is also in no way incompatible with it. *Avatāra* is a phenomenon within this phenomenal world. *Avatāra* is a special form of self-manifestation of God under special circumstances in this phenomenal system of His manifestations. In this special manifested forms, knowledge and power and bliss remain unimpaired and fully awakened within, though their applications are commensurate with the requirements of the situations. The *avatāras* are fully aware in their heart of hearts of their perfect Divinity, but they voluntarily conceal it in their outward conduct and exhibit it only to such an extent as the occasions

demand. Their birth and death, their desires and actions, their outward enjoyments and sufferings, etc. are not, as in the cases of *jivas* in general, governed by the *Law of Karma*, i. e. they do not occur as the results of their own past virtuous and vicious actions. They come down for the sake of the human society and the world at large, and their birth, death, desires, actions, enjoyments, sufferings, etc. occur as the phenomenal means for serving the phenomenal purposes for which they appear on the scene. Herein lies the essential difference between *avatāras* and *jivas*. All the temporal and spatial limitations pertain to the phenomenal bodies which are assumed for the special purposes, but the Self shining in them and regulating their expressions and movements is the Divine Self. The *avatāras* are consciously perfect within, though they show various kinds of imperfections in their phenomenal self-expressions through the bodies. As the Self is not limited in time or space, the objection that in cases of *avatāras* in particular times and places the rest of the world would be without God is evidently without any rational value. The all-pervading all-governing infinite Self, though specially manifesting Himself in and through particular *avatār-bodies* in particular places, does not lose His all-pervading all-governing infinite character at any time. Thus there is no inconsistency between the conception of *avatāra* and the conception of God.

It is to be noted that the activities and modes of life of all *avatāras* are not of a uniform kind. In some there may be a greater display of knowledge, in others a greater display of love and self-sacrifice, in others a greater display of fighting powers, in others a greater display of *tapasyā*, and so on. The displays are in accordance with the nature of the crises, to overcome which God descends into phenomenal bodies. But inwardly all *avatāras* are equally perfect in all respects and are identical in nature and existence. The degrees of perfection, whether in knowledge or in power or

in love, which are actually manifested in the *avatâras* may widely vary, and their ranges of visible activity and perceptible influence also may greatly differ. Different *avatâras* may attract the hearts and command the admiration and reverence of different sections of humanity. All these differences, however, make no real difference in their inner Self, though from our moral and spiritual point of view some *avatāras* may on those grounds be regarded as superior to and more perfect than the others. The more complete the manifestation of Divinity, the more perfect is the *avatāra* and the deeper and wider is his attractive and regulative influence upon the moral and spiritual life of mankind.

There are some schools of religious thought which assert that the *avatāras* cannot be regarded as the incarnations or appearances of God Himself in bodily forms, that no such crises can possibly rise in the Divine creation in which God Himself may be required to come down to any part of this phenomenal world in the form of a created being, but that the *avatāras* are the special embodied manifestations of some aspects of the unique Power of God. They hold that all the diversities of the created world are expressions of the Divine Power, but that these diversities being partial finite transitory manifestations of the Power of God serve also as veils upon the true perfect infinite eternal character of that Power as well as of the Supreme Being to whom the Power belongs. Occasionally however the Power is manifested in such extraordinary forms, as serve partially to remove the veils and to reveal the true character of the Divine Power and the Divine source of the phenomenal world. These extraordinary forms of manifestation of the Divine Power are called *avatāras*. They being the embodiments of an extraordinary amount of moral and spiritual Energy subdue the anti-moral and anti-spiritual forces which prevail in the critical periods, awaken and strengthen the moral and spiritual outlook of the people and pave the way for the

restoration of order and harmony in the world. According to this view *avatāras* are not themselves God, but extraordinary manifestations of the Power of God.

According to some other schools of thought, there is one ideal spiritual Personality, who eternally exists with God and enjoys the infinite bliss of the Divine presence, who, though different from God, in as much as he enjoys the companionship of the perfect blissful Personality of God, is non-different from Him in essence and blissfulness, who experiences himself as non-different from God and experiences the Divinity within himself. This spiritual Personality is the most perfect eternal self-expression of God and the most perfect medium of His self-enjoyment. It is through Him that God is eternally self-conscious and self-enjoying. In the spiritual kingdom of God, i. e. in the realm of self-conscious and self-enjoying Divinity, two Spiritual Personalities are regarded as eternally co-existent, the one being the Father and the other the Son, the one being the Absolute Spirit and the other His spiritual self-expression, the one being the Source of all phenomenal manifestations and the other the most perfect form of His self-manifestation, the one being the Absolute Reality and the other His perfect self-realisation, and both are essentially identical. Now, it is the second spiritual Personality, the Son,—in the spiritual realm of the Absolute, that is the highest ideal of man's spiritual life, and it is this eternal ideal spiritual personality that comes down as the Saviour of Humanity and the Restorer of harmony in the world. Thus according to this view, the *avatāra* is not the descent of God Himself, but the appearance of His eternal spiritual Self-Expression in visible human form.

Some other schools again maintain that the *avatāras* are only extraordinarily gifted human beings, who are specially chosen by God to become His message-bearers to the human society. According to this view, neither God Himself nor

the unique Power of God nor any eternal spiritual Personality from the realm of God descends into the phenomenal world in the form of a created being; but God in His mercy to the world of finite spirits confers some of His spiritual wisdom and power upon some specially selected human beings at different periods of the world's history and entrusts them with the task of expounding the spiritual truths to the human society, making the world-situation suitable for the propagation of these truths and bringing about harmony and unity in the disturbed world-order. These men or supermen or prophets cannot themselves be regarded as God in human forms and be accepted as identical with the highest object of worship. They cannot be looked upon as the manifestations of God in any other sense than that all creatures are the manifestations of the Creator and all effects are the manifestations of the cause. But there can be no denial of the special descent of the Divine power and wisdom into them for the good of mankind and the world. In this sense they can be regarded as *avatāras* and they are objects of veneration, and their life and teachings ought to be followed by men in general.

Thus the doctrine of *avatāra* has been accepted in literal or restricted or figurative sense by most of the important religious systems of the world and has been exercising a great influence upon the moral and religious life of mankind.

Criticism of the doctrine —

We are now to examine if this doctrine of *Avatāra* is rationally acceptable. We are not here to raise the question about the existence of God and about His being the sole cause of this phenomenal world. We have dealt with this question in the preceding chapters of the book and have found that there is no such conception of God and His causality, as is absolutely free from logical difficulties. In our examination of the doctrine of *Avatāra*, we are to assume

the existence of God and to assume with the exponents of this doctrine that He is the sole cause of this phenomenal world.

But we find that the devotees of God conceive Him sometimes as a Person with a distinct form of His own and sometimes as a formless Being. Is the doctrine of *avatāra*, we ask, consistent with either of these conceptions of God? If a distinct *form* be recognised as pertaining to the eternal nature of God, any change in this *form* is inconceivable, because any such change in the *form* would mean the death of God and the production of a new being. Hence the incarnation of God in different bodily *forms* in the phenomenal world created by Him is incompatible with the conception of God with a distinct form of His own. He may be conceived as having created this world of diversities by the exercise of His unique power and wisdom, and He may also be conceived as creating in particular critical periods of this world-process some extraordinary personalities with exceptional powers and talents capable of putting down the forces of disorder and restoring order and harmony in the human society and the cosmic system. But these personalities or superpersonalities, who are exceptionally great from the point of view of our normal experience, are as much the creations of God as the other creatures we ordinarily meet with. How can they be regarded as God-incarnate, except in a figurative sense? How can it be conceived that God periodically gives up His essential eternal inalienable *form* (whether sensuous or supra-sensuous) and assumes newer and newer phenomenal forms subject to birth, growth, disease, decay and death? His omnipotence also cannot be conceived as capable of changing His own essential nature. Nor can it be supposed that God with His eternal form comes down to the world, for the forms of the *avatāras* are found to be different from one another and subject to decay and death. It should be noted that we do not raise here any question with regard to the rational

possibility of conceiving the ultimate Cause of the world-system as a Person with a distinct form. The irrationality of such a conception has been shown elsewhere.

In most of the religious systems, however, God is conceived as a formless Being, because the idea of a definite bodily form is not compatible with the idea of eternity, infinity, absoluteness and the supreme Ground of all forms. Now, can such a formless Being, though assumed to be omnipotent and omniscient, descend into the phenomenal world and incarnate Himself as a phenomenal embodied creature? If this be considered possible, then this formless God is to be conceived either as modifying Himself into an embodied creature or as creating a special psycho-physical organism and entering into it as its Self or as manifesting His unique power and wisdom in the life of some particular embodied being, which is thereby identified with Himself.

With regard to the first alternative, it is first of all difficult to conceive how a perfectly spiritual Being, above time and space, above all changes and limitations, modify Himself into a particular embodied being, limited in time and space and subject to various changes. If formlessness could be changed into forms and still the Divinity could be retained, the formlessness could not be regarded as eternal and essential to Divine nature, and it would be of the nature of some sort of non-eternal changeable form. Moreover, the very possibility of such modification would imply that the Infinite could transform Himself into a finite being and still retain His infinity, the Eternal could become born as a transitory being and still retain His eternal character, the Perfect could live the life of an imperfect being and still remain perfect in nature. All such conceptions involve obvious self-contradictions.

Even if inspite of these apparent contradictions the posibility of the modification of the eternally and essentially formless God into embodied Gods or *avatāras* be conceded,

it would be asked whether God wholly modifies Himself into every particular *avatāra* or partially modifies Himself into an *avatāra*. If the first alternative be accepted, during the period an *avatāra* lives and moves in the world, the formless God does not exist (and is therefore to be thought of as dead), and God is confined to a particular portion of the universe. In such a case though the *wisdom* and *power* of the *avatār-God* be supposed to be inwardly infinite (though outwardly exhibited as finite) and to be capable of governing and preserving the world-process, His *existence* cannot be regarded as all-pervading, He cannot be regarded as immanent in the universe, the relation between Him and the world should be regarded as a relation of externality, which is inconsistent with the conception of God being the material cause or substance or substratum of the phenomenal universe. Further, when the particular *avatār-God* dies or disappears from his bodily life, the formless God is to be supposed to be born again and His formless nature is to be supposed to be produced from the modification of His embodied form. The formless God is thus dead and born again and again. Would the pious exponents of the *avatāra* of God be ready to accept such conclusions?

If to avoid such unacceptable conclusions, to which the supposition of the modification of the entire existence of the formless God would inevitably lead, God is supposed to modify Himself partially into *avatāras*, the conception of *Purna-avatāra* (complete and perfect incarnation of God), so devoutly cherished by certain sections of devotees, should at once be discarded. But what is meant by partial self-modification of the formless God? Obviously it must mean that one part of His formless existence is transformed into an embodied being and the other part remains formless. This would imply that the infinite and eternal formless Spirit is divisible into parts and that particular parts may be changed into particular spatial forms without affecting

the true nature of Spirit. This is evidently self-contradictory. The Supreme Spirit cannot be conceived as formless and at the same time consisting of and divisible into parts, and even if this conception were possible, any change in any essential part would of course involve a change in the whole Spirit and render Him a changing impermanent phenomenal being. Even if this objection be withdrawn, the question would arise,—Does the Divine part modified into *avatāra-body* retain perfect Divine consciousness or does its consciousness become particularised, conditioned and limited ? Does the *avatāra* possess infinite knowledge and power like God Himself or does his knowledge and power become finite on account of his being a modified form of a part of the Divine Being ? Obviously the partial *avatāra* cannot be as omnipotent and omniscient as God Himself, because otherwise either the distinction between the part and the whole should vanish or there should be rival Gods at the same time, one with form and another without form. The very idea of partial self-manifestation of God implies the partial manifestation of His power and knowledge. This being so, it must be admitted that the veil of Ignorance is present over the consciousness of an *avatāra*, that his knowledge and power, however great in comparison with his contemporaries, suffer from limitations, that his Divinity is not perfectly manifest. What then is the essential difference between a man or creature of the phenomenal world with extraordinary abilities and a person regarded as an *avatāra* ? All men and all creatures are no less partial self-manifestations of God, who is conceived as the sole Ground and Cause and Substance of all phenomenal realities

Let us now consider the second alternative, viz. that God creates a special psycho-physical organism and enters into it as its Self. Now, all psycho-physical organisms are the creations of God, and what is meant by saying that the *avatāra-body* is a specially created organism ? Is it not

produced in accordance with the same principles and methods as the other bodies? Is it not also a phenomenal organism born of parents in particular times and places? How can we draw any distinction between an *avatāra-body* and any other living body? It is sometimes asserted that an *avatāra-body* is characterised by a number of special features, which are not found in any other ordinarily produced living bodies. Even if this be true, it cannot be concluded that such a body with such and such special features is specially created for the purpose of being presided over by the perfect Divine Self. In this bewilderingly diversified universe there are found innumerable kinds of living organisms with innumerable kinds of special characteristics. In the human species itself, men of different races possess various kinds of distinguishing racial features, and within the same race the individuals are found to differ widely from one another. It is quite possible that some individuals are born with some special characteristics, which are not generally found in others of the same race. How can such distinguishing features, even if they can be proved to be marks of exceptional greatness, be regarded as an indication of the descent of the Divine Self into such bodies? There is no proof of the special creation of any particular living organism for the special purpose of the play of the unveiled Divine Self in it.

What again is meant by the entrance of God into any particular body as its Self? Does God confine and limit Himself in that body? Is the Divine consciousness particularised and conditioned by the psycho-sensuous system operating in that body? Is there any kind of identification between the Divine Self and the particular body? If such a change happens to the Divine consciousness, God is no longer God; He becomes a *jiva* like the other *jivas*, even though of a superior order. The world would then be virtually Godless during the period of the life of the *avatāra*. If God is

released from His confinement and bondage with the death of the *avatāra-body*, God should have to be regarded as subject to bondage (though self-imposed) and liberation, the bondage and limitation of God in particular bodies should have to be regarded as necessitated by the critical situations of the world-system, which He can restore to the normal order through His own state of bondage and not in the state of His transcendent glory and perfection. Such suppositions are evidently absurd.

If the Divine consciousness is not particularised and conditioned by the psycho-physical system, if God does not in any way identify Himself with the body or the mind, if God remains above all limitations of time and space and power and knowledge, which the connection with the particular body might impose upon Him, His descent and entrance into the body become meaningless. According to the theistic conception, God is the universal Self, He is the Self of all selves, He is the Ultimate Self of all phenomenal beings, He is the ultimate regulator of the births and deaths and courses of life of all living beings in the universe If He is regarded as the Self of the *avatār-bodies* in this general sense, no special meaning is attached to this conception, and there is no ground for regarding the *avatār-bodies* as belonging to a different category from the other living bodies.

It is said that *avatāra-bodies* are not the products of *karma* like the other living bodies and that they do not become the causes of the production of fresh bodies, gross or subtle, as the results of their actions. This is an assertion which might be accepted if the *avatāra* of God were proved on other rational grounds; but such proof being unavailable, to regard some particular individuals, who are otherwise found to participate in the general nature of living beings, as above the *Law of karma* and unregulated by the general laws of the phenomenal world, is an unwarranted supposition.

The third alternative is that the individuals who are regarded as the incarnations of God are born in accordance with the general laws of the phenomenal world like other men and animals; but in a critical period of the world's history, one such individual of a particular place is chosen by God and is blessed with Divine Power and Wisdom for serving the particular purpose of solving the special problems of that period. According to this view God Himself does not descend into the world as a particular individual, but His power and wisdom descend into a specially selected individual. But are the infinite power and wisdom wholly manifested in the selected individual or are they partially manifested? There is no proof that any such individual is possessed of infinite power and wisdom. The power and knowledge of every individual recognised as an incarnation of God are found to be limited and conditioned, and the amount of knowledge and power manifested in him is found as in the cases of other individuals to be acquired by dint of systematic efforts with the help of favourable social, political, cultural, moral and other forces and through struggle against hostile forces. There is no adequate ground for inferring that the knowledge and power of the so-called *avatāras* comes down directly from God and reveal themselves to them, while the knowledge and power of all other individuals are regarded as acquired by them and as the fruits of their own efforts. In one sense the knowledge and power manifested in every individual creature, high or low, great or small, may be regarded as coming down and derived from God, Who is the sole Source of all knowledge and power, and may accordingly be conceived as a partial manifestation of Divine knowledge and power through a particular psycho-physical organism under limitations of some phenomenal conditions. The efforts by which such knowledge and power are acquired and developed may be looked upon as the divinely planned phenomenal processes

through which the knowledge and power of God are manifested and reproduced in limited particluarised and conditioned forms in His created individuals. In this sense there is no reason for recognising any fundamental difference between the knowledge and power of the so-called *avatāras* and those of other individuals, except perhaps in the matter of degrees. In the other and the generally recognised sense, all knowledge and power of all individuals, including those who are believed to be Divine incarnations, are phenomenal, non-eternal, acquired and developed, differing in different cases only in degrees. Thus the descent of Divine knowledge and power into particular selected individuals in any special sense cannot be rationally established.

The exponents of the *avatāra*-doctrine point out some evidence in favour of the Divinity of particular individuals or of their knowledge and power. In the speeches of these individuals we find expressions which definitely indicate that God is speaking through them. Sometimes they use words in the first person and singular number with reference to the production and regulation of cosmic phenomena, which can be attributed only to God. Sometimes they are found to speak and act from such super-sensuous, super-mental and super-human planes of consciousness as are not possible to ordinary human beings, and such speeches and actions bear testimony to their divinity. Their knowledge is often found to transcend the limitations of time, place and circumstances, and they are found to be acquainted with things, the knowledge of which they never acquired. Their words and movements are often found to exercise commanding influence upon the thought-currents of the human minds, the course of life of the human society and even the direction of the cosmic events; such influence cannot be expected from ordinary human beings, however extraordinarily powerful they may be. Sometimes they are found to rise above the apparent consciousness of their

phenomenal individuality and the domestic, social and physical relations which they as individuals bear to other persons and things, and to deal with all exactly as God would have dealt with them. They are found to respond to the prayers which the devotees offer to God, to reward the virtues of men and punish their sins. All such sorts of things experienced in the conduct of the *avatāras* by men of spiritual insight coming in contact with them are unfailing evidences to establish the truth that it is God-consciousness which reigns in the life of these individuals, that they are the embodiments of the Divine Self, that the knowledge and power and action manifested in their life are the expressions of the Divinity specially incarnated in them.

Without challenging the authenticity of the facts which the ardent admirers are said to experience in the lives of the persons recognised by them as *avatāras*, and without questioning the sincerity of the individuals who speak and act in the name of God, we may submit that the conclusions sought to be drawn from them are not logically justified. Any individual born with a suitable bodily and mental constitution, who passes through an appropriate course of moral and spiritual discipline and concentrates his attention upon God as he conceives Him for a certain length of time, may on some occasions be so deeply absorbed in his thought that his consciousness may be apparently identified with the Divine consciousness, which is the object of his meditation. He then becomes a God-intoxicated man. He may lose the consciousness of his distinct individuality and may experience himself either as a Divine personality or a vehicle for the descent of God. The experience of his identity with God in the concentrated state of his mind may exercise such a strong influence upon his normal consciousness that even in the normal state he may sincerely carry the conviction that his experiences are bestowed on him directly by God Himself, that his knowledge and power come down direct from the infinite Source of all knowledge and power, that

whatever he speaks through his mouth is the word of God, that whatever he does through his organs of activity is the doing of God, that he has no existence apart from the Divine Existence, that his body, his sense-organs, his mind and heart really belong to God, that he is truly a Divine man. This God-intoxicated or God-absorbed state may be more permanent and more deep-rooted in the consciousness of some such individuals than in others. But from the phenomenal point of view this must be recognised to be an *acquired* state of the mind and a state capable of being acquired by others also through appropriate practice. As a result of the concentration of the psychical energy, the capacity of knowing and doing what one likes to know or do may immensely increase, and the knowledge and power of an individual adept in such practice may sometimes appear to be superhuman. He may even respond to the prayers of the surrounding people and bestow blessings on them. In such cases also his thoughts and speeches and actions, when scrutinised, are found to bear the impress of his special preconceived notions, the special mode of training his mind and body received, the special circumstances in which he was born and brought up, the special problems of individual or social life which stimulated his intellect and power. But on account of the attainment of the God-intoxicated character of his consciousness, those thoughts and speeches and actions are brightened by a halo of divinity and assume some special sacred forms. Thus as all such phenomena can be rationally explained in accordance with the general laws applicable to all human individuals, there is no justification for regarding some individuals as exceptions to these laws and as supernatural self-manifestations of God Himself.

In the spiritual life of a man the consciousness of identity with the Supreme Source of all existences is a phenomenon, which is experienced in a certain type of trance or ecstasy. Moreover, when it is by a special mode

of reasoning ascertained that all effects are essentially non-different from their cause and that God is the sole cause of the entire phenomenal world and also that He is the true noumenal Self of all conscious beings, the identity of the self and the objective world with God is accepted as a metaphysical truth. If a *sādhaka* with a purified and steadied mind constantly thinks and meditates on this truth, the idea may gradually develop into a deep conviction or actual realisation, and his entire outlook on himself and the world and his speeches, actions and feelings may be moulded in accordance with this idea. Even if an individual without any philosophical insight is somehow led to believe that he is specially created or sent down to the world for fulfilling some divine mission or that all his knowledge and power have come down from God for accomplishing some purpose of God in His world or even that God has incarnated Himself in him for conferring some blessings on mankind and the world, such belief may through constant culture take a deep root in his consciousness, may give a special mould to his thoughts, speeches and activities and may immensely add to his strength of will and power of organisation. Similar belief inculcated in the minds of his admirers and followers also may have strong favourable reaction on him. But such phenomena can not lead a rational thinker to the conclusion that those individuals really become God or are really *avatāras* in any of the senses accepted by their exponents.

With regard to the critical periods in the life of the Humanity and the world, it may be said that as we experience ups and downs, exhilarations and depressions, advancements and retrogressions, etc. succeeding each other in our individual life, and as such transitions are found to be caused through the apparently sudden growth and prevalence of strong forces for good or for evil (as the case may be) within the individual as well as in his environments, so the history of mankind and the world may testify to similar ups and downs, etc. in the lives of

communities and races and even of the entire human species, and deeper and wider researches may even discover similar phenomena in the life of the whole universe. It may also be true that in the periods of downward movements there are born in the particular communities or races concerned one or more unusually powerful individuals and organisations, whose triumphs serve as destructive or disorganising or degrading forces in particular communities or races affected by their actions or even the entire human society, and that similarly at the time of the transition to better states some individuals with extraordinary dynamic power, personal magnetism, wide perspective and deep insight into the nature of the problems and the way to their solution appear on the scene, and attain victory over the forces of evil. But all these may be explained as occurring in accordance with the laws of the phenomenal world. If the triumphant forces of evil are not regarded as special *avatāras* of God, there is no ground for regarding the triumphant forces of good as the special *avatāras* of God. God being conceived as the supreme creator and regulator of all the phenomena of the world, whether considered by us as good or evil from our finite points of view, He is as much responsible for the periodical triumphs of the forces of evil as for the periodical triumphs of the forces of good. The powerful *asuras* and the powerful destroyers of the ***Asuras*** may both be regarded as the special manifestations of the Divine Energy, simply because of their unusual birth in the world. But truly the births and triumphs of such unusually powerful personalities at particular periods of the world's history are also regulated by the governing laws of the phenomenal world. Hence no necessity for recognising some historical personalities as the special *avatāras* of God is proved by these cycles of ups and downs in the world or in the collective life of mankind.

Another argument has been put forward for proving the necessity of *avatāra* of God. It is said that the conscious

beings have been placed under bondage and sorrow by the creative power of God and some special exercise of the Divine Power in the opposite direction is necessary for delivering them from the bondage and sorrow. Now, even if the validity of this argument were admitted, it would not prove the necessity of God's coming down to the world as particular individuals or divinising some particular individual created beings at particular times in particular places. By the mere exercise of His will He might deliver from bondage and sorrow whomsoever He liked. The work of liberation is admitted to be going on in the world side by side with creation from beginningless time. How can the descent of God Himself or of His merciful power or of His wisdom into particular parts of the world at long intervals have any connection with this work of liberating individual conscious beings at all times and places?

Moreover, does God wish for the liberation of all conscious beings or of particular conscious beings arbitrarily selected or of those who make themselves worthy of liberation by virtue of their own moral and spiritual self-discipline? Obviously He cannot wish for the liberation of all, for there being no other power to resist the will of the Omnipotent Creator of the universe, His will would have been immediately followed by the liberation of all and the world-process would in that case have been impossible. The will for universal liberation is incompatible with the will for creation and preservation of the world-process. It should be noted here that as the will for the liberation of all conscious beings from bondage and sorrow is incompatible with the nature of the Divine Creator and Preserver and Regulator of the phenomenal world, God cannot be rationally conceived as *a loving and merciful* Being,—love and mercy cannot be regarded as an essential element in His eternal nature. Hence it is mere rhetorical and irrational outburst of the blind devotional emotions of pious men to proclaim that God in His infinite love and mercy for all descends among His

unfortunate beloved creatures or sends His only true-begotten Son or Messiah among them for the purpose of delivering them from bondage and sorrow. If on the other hand God is conceived as actuated by the desire to liberate some arbitrarily chosen conscious beings, He must be accused of partiality and nepotism unworthy even of His humble human children. Not only that; the creation of such beings for suffering from bondage and sorrow and then after some time the growth of a desire to liberate them without any sufficient reason and the adoption of contrivances for fulfilling this desire at different periods of their troublesome journey in the world would indicate a deplorable unsteadiness of the Divine Mind and a lack of sufficient wisdom and power.

Finally, the third alternative must be accepted as the most reasonable view-point. In that case it must be admitted that the conscious beings are, in the normal process of creation and government of the phenomenal world, endowed with the freedom and power to adopt appropriate courses of moral and spiritual discipline and to make themselves worthy of liberation. Now, if worthiness for liberation can be attained by the created beings by dint of their own efforts, what can possibly stand in the way of their actual attainment of liberation? If between the worthiness for liberation and the actual attainment of liberation God has in His creative design placed any barrier, which only He Himself can remove or destroy by a special exertion of His unique power or by His descent into the world in some embodied form, this must be regarded either as cruelty or as tyranny or as imperfection on the part of the Creator. This is of course inconsistent with all acceptable conceptions about the nature of God. Whatever may be the idea of liberation, if it is to be recognised as a fact and as the ultimate goal of every conscious being's journey in the phenomenal world, it must be conceived as attainable through appropriate moral and spiritual discipline and the possibility of the attainment of liberation by such means must be regarded as present in the

very nature of the world-system. If it were not so, liberation, being inconsistent with the nature of the world-system, would be impossible. No direct and exceptional intervention of the personality or power of God in the form of an embodied being can be proved as necessitated by the fact of liberation.

It is sometimes argued that the possibility of the attainment of liberation by a created being by dint of its own power would mean the triumph of the power of a created being over the creative power of the Almighty, by which it is placed under bondage. Those who argue thus are lacking in any insight into their own conception of the Divinity. God is conceived as immanent as the true Self or as the regulator of the individual self in every created being. The power and wisdom exercised by the conscious beings are also derived from or are the particularised manifestations of the Divine power and wisdom. These are progressively unfolded and enlightened through suitable processes in these conscious beings who gradually get rid of their limitations and imperfections. It is the immanent Divinity hidden in all conscious individuals, which is more and more clearly and shiningly manifested in them through what is called moral and spiritual discipline. What is called Liberation is the highest stage of this process of the progressive unfoldment and enlightenment of the Divine power and wisdom operating within the conscious beings. It is sheer folly to hold that the bondage and suffering are created by the Divine Power, while the wisdom and power exerted for getting rid of them are human and not Divine. Bondage and liberation, sorrow and emancipation from it, ignorance and knowledge must be conceived as equally belonging to the divine scheme of the phenomenal world. It would be a very poor conception of God, if He were held responsible only for the bondage and sorrow of the conscious beings, and the efforts for emancipation from them were not regarded as inspired by Him and the wisdom and power exhibited in

these efforts were not regarded as supplied by Him from within. Thus consistently with their pious conception of the Divine creation and government of the world, the exponents of the view can show no reason for establishing the necessity of God's outwardly descending into the world with a view to assist the conscious beings in attaining liberation.

Thus the doctrine of *avatāra* cannot be established either as a fact or as a matter of moral or spiritual or cosmic necessity or as even consistent with the conception of God.

We have discussed this doctrine on the basis of the existence and creatorship of Personal God, as assumed by the exponents of this doctrine, and have found that it cannot be established on a rational foundation. That the very fundamental assumption of the Personality of the Ultimate Ground of the phenomenal universe is beset with various logical difficulties and is unwarrantable, we have pointed out on other occasions.

VII

JNĀNA—SĀDHANĀ

(Expository)

According to a good many religio-philosophical schools the religious discipline consists primarily in the culture of true knowledge, all other practices and methods being adopted as subsidiary to it. While differing in many important respects they agree in this that Ignorance is the ultimate source of our bondage and suffering and that liberation consists in the attainment of the knowledge of Absolute Truth and the destruction of Ignorance. With regard to the nature of Absolute Truth they hold different opinions which are the results of their philosophical speculations. But each of them holds that as soon as Absolute Truth is known, bondage and suffering are no more, the mundane existence is no more. Consistently with their metaphysical conclusions, they maintain, each in its own way, that bondage and suffering do not at any time really pertain to the nature of the self, that the limitations of mundane existence never really qualify the essential character of the self or produce any kind of modification in it, and that the self has not to pass from any real mundane state of bondage and suffering to another real supra-mundane state of liberation. All the worldly experiences and changes of states are, so far as the self is concerned, illusory ; they appear in the presence of the self and are ascribed to it ; and when this illusoriness is realised through right knowledge, the self experiences its real character and is said to attain liberation. Thus the knowledge that the self has no real bondage and sorrow, amounts to the attainment of liberation from the apparent bondage and sorrow.

Hence this knowledge is the goal to be attained by every aspirant for liberation and religion consists in the discipline necessary for this purpose. *Karma* (religious practices) and *Bhakti* (the culture of love and reverence) may be resorted to, only if and so far as they may be helpful in the attainment of this knowledge.

Now, what is the principal method of the cultivation of true knowledge ? In this respect also we may indicate a general agreement among the different schools, though there are fundamental differences in details. First of all, it is generally held that lessons on the nature of Absolute Truth should be received by the *Sādhaka* from the Scripture, or to speak more precisely, from some spiritual teacher who is versed in the Scripture and has verified its assertions in his own experience. The teacher should explain to the truth-seeker (directly or indirectly as the peculiar nature of the subject-matter might require) the real character of Absolute Truth and thereby point out the illusoriness or error of his normal experiences and conceptions. The Truth spoken (whether directly or indirectly) by the teacher with the strength born of faith in Scripture and personal realisation drives out from the mind of the disciple the inborn faith in the validity of the normal experiences of his mundane existence and captures his imagination and reason. He then learns to think and feel in the light of that Truth. He *hears* from such reliable authorities as the Scripture and the preceptor that he is not essentially under any real bondage, that he experiences as his own the apparent vicissitudes of worldly life and the sorrows originating from them on account of his ignorance of the true nature of his self and false outlook on life and the world, and that with the experience of Truth all these apparent bondages and limitations would once for all vanish as non-existent without

any other active effort for transcending or destroying them. Having learnt this, he seriously and assiduously contemplates on the significance of the sayings of the preceptor and the scriptural texts, tries to drive out the old ideas and to look upon himself and the objects of his experience in the new light, and undergoes systematic self-discipline for illumining his entire existence and experience with this light. This is one fundamental aspect of *Jnāna-sādhanā.*

But since man is an intellectual being, if the intellect is not perfectly satisfied with regard to the infallibility of the instructions received from the scripture and the preceptor, doubts and difficulties are sure to haunt the mind. The intellect has been in the habit of thinking in different ways and has been under the influence of many preconceived notions inconsistent with those instructions. Unless the truths taught by the Scripture and the preceptor are rationally established and the facts of undeniable sensuous and mental experience are shown to be capable of being adequately explained by reference to them, reason is sure to revolt against faith and disturb the mental equilibrium. Faith in the infallibility of the scripture and the preceptor may try to suppress reason; but being the most essential element in the human nature, reason cannot possibly be suppressed for all times. In the very attempts to suppress the demands of reason, faith becomes weakened. If reason, standing on direct experience and the principles of logic, goes on pointing out inconsistencies and inadequacies in the teachings of the scripture and the preceptor, faith cannot long sustain itself. Hence reason has to be systematically trained to think in the light of the higher truths obtained from those presumably infallible authorities, and those truths have to be established on a rational basis. With the help of suitable logical arguments, it has to be proved that the Truth

as taught by the scripture and the preceptor is alone capable of furnishing adequate explanation for all facts of experience and of perfectly satisfying the demands of reason. The inadequacies and inconsistencies of all the previously conceived ideas incompatible with it have to be realised, and the mind should be freed from them. All possible doubts should be removed by the strength of the rational arguments by which the Truth is established. Thus faith and reason should be entirely at one with regard to the unassailable character of the Truth, which should thereby completely supersede all previously conceived and cherished notions about reality and drive out all interests and feelings and desires and aversions associated with them. This philosophical discipline or rational reflection upon Truth is the second fundamental factor in the *Jnāna-sādhanā*.

This culture of faith and reason is not enough for the destruction of the primordial ignorance and of the apparent bondage and sorrow originating therefrom. Faith in the Truth as obtained from the scripture and the preceptor, strengthened by the rational establishment of this Truth by means of convincing metaphysical reflection, may greatly loosen the inborn faith in the ultimate reality of the objects of our sense-experience and logical inference based upon it, and may considerably untie the bonds of attachment and aversion and thereby diminish the strength of the worldly joys and sorrows arising from different kinds of relationship with those objects. But such *indirect knowledge* of Truth through faith and reason cannot cut at the root of Ignorance, and cannot absolutely emancipate the self of the *sādhaka* from the false notions which, though not polluting its essential nature, have become associated with it through birth after birth; it cannot therefore make the mind completely free from restlessness and worldwardness and

cannot wholly destroy the source of apparent bondage and sorrow. For this purpose *direct realisation* of Truth is necessary, and this can be attained by means of stricter self-discipline and deeper *meditation*. The Absolute Truth, which is *heard* and received with faith from the preceptor and the scripture and is ascertained rationally by metaphysical speculation, has to be intensely and continuously meditated upon in order that it may be directly perceived. The attention of the mind has to be completely withdrawn from all gross and subtle objects,—all physical and mental phenomena,—all objects of internal and external experience of the worldly life and all feelings and emotions and desires that arise in relation to such experience. Attempts should be made even to forget the *sādhaka's* own individuality. The attention should be undividedly fixed upon what has been ascertained as the Absolute Reality from the ontological point of view and the Highest Ideal from the view-point of the apparent course of life. In the earlier stages of this practice of meditation, the automatic reproduction of the memories of the wordly experiences and of the preconceived contrary notions, the natural impurity and unsteadiness of the mind, the fatigue caused by the struggle to rid itself of the hindrances and to make itself pure and steady, the proneness of the mind to fall into drowsiness and sleep whenever it is free from restlessness, and various other obstructions stand as apparently insuperable barriers in the way of the concentration of the mind upon what it has accepted as the Absolute Truth. But continuous and intense practice overcomes all those difficulties, and the mind becomes gradually concentrated upon and identified with that Truth. Ultimately the mind becomes so pure, steady and transparent, that the Absolute Truth perfectly reflects

itself upon it and there is an indescribable state of the perfect realisation of the Truth.

All the schools, advocating and expounding this line of spiritual *sādhanā* in their own distinctive ways, agree in asserting that the final experience attained by this *sādhanā* is a direct supersensuous and even supra-mental perception of the Absolute Truth and that this experience is inexplicable in terms of our normal phenomenal experience. They further agree in holding that when this experience is attained, ignorance is radically destroyed and there is perfect liberation from the mundane existence and the bondage and suffering pertaining to it.

It should be noted that this *Jnāna-sādhanā*, depends, in actual practice, upon some favourable subjective and objective conditions. If the body and the mind are not suitably prepared, if the reason is not adequately developed, if the desires and passions are too strong to be kept under control, if the environment is not conducive to the preservation of the tranquillity of the mind and the awakenment and stimulation of the spiritual aspiration in it, a man cannot possibly devote himself to the practice of the esoteric aspects of this system of *sādhanā*. Continuous and systematic contemplation upon the inner significance of the teachings of the scripture and the preceptor for the purpose of obtaining a thorough understanding of it and imbibing an unshakable faith in its reality, undisturbed application of the faculty of reason to philosophical reflection for the purpose of freeing the intellect from all possible doubts and false notions with regard to the nature of Absolute Truth, and constant practice of meditation for the purpose of direct realisation of this Truth, presuppose a suitable discipline of the body, the mind and the reason, a considerable amount of

freedom from and indifference to worldly duties and obligations, the development of a strong yearning for liberation and favourable environmental circumstances. Each system of *Jnāna-sādhanā*, accordingly, enjoins upon the aspirants certain preliminary courses of self-discipline, which though outwardly different in the different systems have the same ulterior end in view.

It is through such self-preparation that the aspirant acquires the capacity to devote himself to the contemplation, reflection, meditation, comprehension and realisation of the Absolute Truth. According to the view of these schools, if *Karma* or *Bhakti* or the two combined be adhered to as the sole or the highest spiritual *sādhanā*, there is no hope of *mukti* or liberation. That which is born of ignorance can be destroyed only by true knowledge,and not by any activity or emotion. Bondage and misery which are the apparent products of ignorance with regard to Absolute Truth, can be destroyed only by true knowledge or realisation of this Truth, and not by any kind of virtuous and meritorious actions nor by the culture of the noblest emotion of love and reverence towards the highest imaginable object. *Karma-sādhanā* and *Bhakti-sādhanā* must be accepted as steps to *Jnāna-sādhanā*, which alone can lead to liberation. (For distinction between *Jnāna-sādhanā* and *Bhakti-sādhanā* see page 145 foot-note).

Now, so far we have explained the fundamental principles of *Jnāna-sādhanā*, in which there is general agreement among the different religio-philosophical sects, who advocate and practise this *sādhanā* and hold it to be the final means of absolute liberation. But there are, as can be obviously anticipated, wide divergences of views about the actual forms in which it should be practised, on

account of the widely different views held with regard to the nature of the Absolute Reality.

The sects that lay emphasis upon this *Jnāna-sādhanā* may first of all be divided into two classes, viz. those who hold the self to be a real permanent entity and those who deny the real existence of any permanent self. According to the latter, the very consciousness of the self as a permanent spiritual entity, retaining its changeless identity in the midst of all kinds of physical and mental changes, is due to Ignorance. The Absolute Truth, as it has been ascertained by them, is that there is no permanent self, no permanent substance within or without, no relation between the self and anything else, nothing to be gained or shunned by the self. The Absolute Truth is the Absolute Void. It is Ignorance which gives rise to the stream of momentary experiences and to the consciousness of a permanent self as the support of these experiences as well as the conception of an objective world of permanent material substances related to these experiences. Through the culture of spiritual knowledge this false consciousness of permanent self and permanent world has to be destroyed For this purpose the aspirant has to take lessons from the preceptor on the significance of Absolute Void and the mode of thinking on it, and has to be convinced of the exclusive validity of this doctrine by means of philosophical reflection with the help of satisfactory rational arguments. Then he should have recourse to meditation on the Absolute Void in accordance with the prescribed process.* As a result of such long-practised

*** Though we find it impracticable to make 'Void" the object of contemplation, yet the process of *Sādhanā* underlying this mode of thought may be given a form in the following manner. It is a method of great practical importance for those who find it difficult to put faith in any metaphysical reality like Brahman, God or the Self, but**

deep meditation, it is ultimately realised that there is no self, no world, no relation, no bondage and sorrow, no effort and fulfilment, no *karma* and its fruit, that all is void and void is all. This *nirvāna* or the cessation of the apparent individuality is attained through perfect knowledge.

The schools which regard the self as a real permanent entity may again be divided into two classes, viz. those which hold that there is ultimately one absolute self-existent self-luminous Reality originating and sustaining the plurality of selves and objects of the world, and those which do not

have a leaning towards the practice of meditation and feel the necessity of concentrating the mind and keeping it free from all distractions for getting rid of the sorrows of life The most suitable method of meditation for such a *Sādhaka* is to try to make his mind vacant by withdrawing his attention from all kinds of objects, physical or mental, empirical or non-empirical. His attempt at concentration should be directed to the non-thinking of any object and the suppression of every impression that may be automatically roused in course of the meditation, and thus keep the mind contentless or vacant as far as practicable As the aspirant does not make efforts to see any fancied form, or to retain any preconceived notions about the nature of the self, or to cultivate the thought of any so-called pervading entity separate or non-separate from himself, or to attend to any other object, his mind does not get concentrated on any such concept During this practice of concentration in which there is no object to meditate upon, the aspirant should try to stop every thought at its very birth. He should struggle to negate imagination His practice of meditation should be directed to the complete stoppage of the diversified flow of thought or consciousness. It would mean virtually the cessation of all thought, because if you think of nothing, you do not think at all.

This practice should be distinguished from other practices in so far as in them there are two kinds of effort, namely the effort at the suppression of the aroused impressions and that of concentration on the desired object of meditation; whereas in this practice there is merely the effort to suppress those impressions and no such object

accept one such Reality. These latter assert that there is really a plurality of independent unassociated self-existent self-luminous attributeless changeless selves having no temporal or spatial limitations, and that the world of changing diversities is the product of the evolution of another independent self-existent non-luminous Entity, viz. *Prakriti*[1] or Primordial Energy. According to them, *Prakriti* evolves itself step by step into Intelligence, Ego, Mind, senses, subtle essences of material objects and gross material objects, in

to fix the mind upon. At the first stage of those *Sādhanās* (having object or idea to fix upon) struggle to withdraw from other objects is predominant; at the second stage the mind sometimes becomes fixed and at short intervals it gets detached from the object of contemplation; at a higher stage, after long practice, the mind becomes fixed upon the object for a longer period and acquires the capacity to intuit the object (ideal) of contemplation, after increased concentration, the object alone appears to the aspirant, the sense of seership viz the consciousness "I am realising the object" becomes faded, though not altogether effaced, after more practice there is no feeling of the experiencer and the experienced This is *Samādhi* (trance) without thought. Now let us make clear what happens in the above *Sādhanā* as distinguished from these. In such *Sādhanā* the mind does not refer to any object nor is any object realised or intuited. In the progressive stages of this *Sādhanā* we experience ideas becoming gradually more and more subtle; the steps leading on, first, ideas having reference to gross objects outside, then to subtle thoughts alone with less intensity of reference, and afterwards to a very subtle state of mind where no objective reference can be distinguished and voidness is experienced In this state if any thought of concentrating on any object creeps into the aspirant's mind or some thought rises spontaneously, he feels this desired or aroused thought as an object intuited; but those who practise this objectless *Sādhanā* generally try to lengthen the period of the enjoyment of pure calmness and silence of the mind. After strenuous practice that feeling also, involving a subtle distinction between the feeler and the felt, lapses and the state of trance without any distinct consciousness is attained.

the proximity of the selves, which by their mere self-luminous presence illumine and manifest these products. It is held that though the essential character of the selves is in no way affected or modified by this contact with *Prakriti* and its products, the properties and functions of intelligence, ego, mind etc. are falsely attributed to them and they appear to have a mundane existence with bondage and limitations, joys and sorrows, cognitions and activities etc. This non-discrimination of the essential character of the selves from the nature of *Prakriti* and its products, or, what is the same thing, each self's ignorance of its own essential self-complete self-perfect self-luminous character, is without any beginning. Thus it is evident that though the world as the product of *Prakriti* has its objective reality, the worldliness of each self is illusory and due to beginningless ignorance. This ignorance can be destroyed by *Jnāna–sādhanā*. An aspirant for liberation, having to some extent purified himself by preliminary practices, has to learn that his true self is in its essential character eternally pure and self-luminous, unassociated with and unmodified by the bodily, mental and intellectual functions and changes and free from all joys and sorrows and all bondages and limitations. This Absolute Truth has then to be ascertained by rational reflection, and then to be deeply meditated upon. As the ultimate result of this practice the self is directly *realised* as discriminated and dissociated from *Prakriti* and its products, its apparent relation with the world ceases and it passes into its true liberated condition. Liberation, thus, consists in the true knowledge of the real nature of the individual self as distinguished and dissociated from *Prakriti*, which is the material cause of the universe.

The sects that agree in regarding one self-existent and self-luminous Being as the ultimate Reality may again

be divided into two classes. One class maintains that this Supreme Being or *Brahman* exists eternally with the plurality of *selves* and the diversified world, which owe their existence and the continuity of their existence to Him and Him alone. According to this class, Brahman, the selves and the world are all eternal; but Brahman is the Absolute Reality in the sense that the selves and the world have no existence apart from and independent of His existence. Ignorance consists in the unawareness of the selves that they and the world are so essentially and eternally related to Brahman, that they exist by, in and for Brahman and that they in their real nature participate in the nature of Brahman. This ignorance of the true relation of the selves to Brahman is the cause of the bondage and suffering they experience in this world. It is due to this ignorance that they experience themselves as passing through various changes of states, suffering various kinds of sorrows and enjoying various kinds of pleasures in this world and they regard their enjoyments and sufferings and changes of states as dependent upon the worldly circumstances, and these worldly circumstances as produced partly by the uncontrollable forces and unaccountable laws of nature and partly by their own efforts. Consequently they become attached to certain types of worldly phenomena and averse to others, attribute the changes of physical and mental states to themselves, become apparently deprived of the illumination and blissfulness which is essentially theirs by virtue of their eternal relation to self-conscious and self-enjoying Brahman, and fall apparent victims to various sorts of vicissitudes. According to this view, true knowledge consists in the realisation of the true relation between Brahman, the selves and the world. When a self fully and directly cognises

that it really belongs to and is essentially non-different from Brahman, that all other selves as well as objects of the universe also really belong to, are governed by and are essentially non-different from Him, it becomes liberated from all bondage and suffering and consciously participates in the perfectly good, beautiful and blissful self-conscious nature of Brahman and lives eternally in this perfect enjoyment. They feel themselves as above space and time, untouched by spatial and temporal limitations and changes, and unattached to body and mind, though in relation to infinite Brahman they are finite and even atomic spiritual entities.

According to this view, this *Jnāna-sādhanā* leads ultimately to a higher form of *Bhakti* (*Parà-Bhakti*), because when the true eternal relation of the self to Brahman is realised and its ignorance and worldly-mindedness are destroyed, the self must eternally dwell in and be in enjoyment of Brahman in a superconscious state, which can only be characterised as the highest form of Love. This communion in Love is desireless and purposeless, undivided and undistracted, calm and tranquil, blissful and perfect. This highest form of love for Brahman and eternal communion with Him through love is the state of liberation ; in which the self eternally retains its individuality in and as a part or self-manifestation of Brahman.

The different religious sects advocating the above view of *sàdhanà*, liberation and Absolute Truth have various minor points of difference among themselves, and for the purpose of the present discussion we refrain from entering into those details.

According to another religio-philosophical school, the Absolute Truth is that the ultimate Reality, viz. Brahman, is the one attributeless changeless differenceless relationless self-luminous Being, and that through the inexplicable agency of beginningless Ignorance this Reality illusorily appears as a plurality of selves and a system of physical and mental phenomena constituting the world. Accordingly, the individual selves as distinct from and related to one another, and the diverse phenomena, gross and subtle, occuring in their presence and affecting their destinies, have no real existence, either outside Brahman or within His all-inclusive nature. They are all illusory appearances, produced by Ignorance on Brahman as substratum. Brahman neither really creates them out of Himself, nor really supports them upon or within Himself, nor is in any way really related to them. It is this differenceless unity of Brahman that has to be realised through *Jnāna-sādhanā* by the aspirant for liberation from the apparent bondage of worldly existence and the consequent apparent limitations and sufferings. With the self-revelation of Self-Brahman to Itself Root-Ignorance vanishes, and with it all possibility of worldliness and sorrow disappears. When this knowledge of Absolute Truth is attained, the *sādhaka* should experience absolutely no difference between himself and Brahman, there should be no difference between the knower and the known—experiencer and the experienced; the apparent self of the *sādhaka* should be completely identified with and merged in the one real absolute Self, viz. Brahman, and the *consciousness* of this identity also should disappear (for such phenomenal consciousness would involve some subtle difference and duality.) To such a Truth-realiser there is no ego, no world, no God, no cognition, no emotion, no volition; he *becomes* the

attributeless differenceless changeless self-luminous Consciousness, which he truly and eternally *is*.

(Critical.)

Now, a comparative study of the different systems advocating this *Jnàna-sàdhanà* constitutes a sufficient criticism of the objective value of the *sàdhanà* itself. *Jnāna-sādhanā* as a form of spiritual practice is more intimately connected with Metaphysics than *karma-sàdhanà* and *Bhakti-sàdhanà*. *Karma-sādhanà* or the religion of action and *Bhakti-sādhanā* or the religion of love and reverence are not so directly undermined by any error in the conception of their metaphysical background as *Jnāna-sādhanā* is. *Jnāna-sādhanā* is in its esoteric aspect taken as founded on the metaphysical validity of the conception about the self. If the metaphysical validity of a *sādhaka's* idea about the self is not established, the *sādhanā* must suffer in value, because in this path the *sādhaka* does not aspire for attaining something unattained, or for loving and worshipping or enjoying any Ideal appealing to his heart and intellect, but merely for knowing the self as it really is, for experiencing the Absolute Truth.

But it is evident to every rational mind that mutually contradictory or contrary ideas about the same self-existent entity cannot all be regarded as truly representing the nature of that entity. What, however, does the study of the different schools of *Jnāna-sādhanā* reveal ? According to some schools there is no permanent self at all and the very consciousness of a permanent self is the product of ignorance ; according to others, the self alone is the permanent changeless entity and to experience it as

modifying or passing through changes of states is due to ignorance. According to some there are innumerable self-existent changeless self-luminous selves, and according to others there exists in reality only one non-dual changeless Self-luminous Self, viz. Brahman, and the plurality of selves is only the illusory manifestation of that one Self. According to some the one Absolute Self or Brahman and the countless individual selves are both equally real, though the latter exist in, for and by the former, and according to others the latter appear as real only so long as the former is veiled by ignorance, and when the ignorance is destroyed and the veil removed, the former alone manifests itself as real and the latter disappear as unreal. According to some the self, though eternally existent, has attributes and admits of modifications, and according to others it is absolutely attributeless and changeless. According to some the selves are of atomic constitution, and according to others they are all-pervading. In this way various ideas are cherished about the metaphysical nature of the self by the different religio-philosophical schools, and they are contradictory to each other.

All these ideas are propounded by different scriptures which claim to be infallible, and propagated by religious teachers who claim to have realised Absolute Truth. Since an individual *sādhaka*, being endowed with a rational mind, cannot accept all these mutually contradictory ideas as equally true, different *sādhakas*, according to their temperament, environment and education, believe in different scriptures and final authorities and different *āchāryas* as having been blessed with the realisation of the Ultimate Truth. Each *sādhaka*, advancing in the path of *Jnāna-sādhanā*, has therefore to refuse the veracity of a

large number of scriptures and religious teachers, and in defiance of the antagonistic assertions of so many scriptures and prophets revered and implicitly relied on by the *Jnāna-sādhakas* of so many other schools, has to adhere to his own chosen scripture and prophet. If he faithfully adheres to his chosen path as his own *swa-dharma* (own religion), leaving others to follow what they may regard as their own *swadharma*, there may not arise any conflict among the pursuers of different paths; but in that case the belief in the ultimate objective validity of their conceptions about Absolute Truth, which they seek to realise, has to be abandoned. The conception cherished by each sect and sectarian scripture and teacher may in that case be valued as representing a particular high ideal and not as representing the nature of the Absolute Reality. The realisation of each of these ideals may be recognised as of great benefit for solving many of the practical problems of a man's outer and inner life, but the realisation of each of them cannot be rationally regarded as the realisation of Absolute Truth.

The advocates of each of these systems, however, emphatically assert that the highest experience which is attained as the ultimate result of deep meditation at the final stage of *Jnāna sādhanā* is not merely the realisation of a chosen Ideal, but the direct intuitive experience of the Absolute Reality. The fundamental difference between the realisation of an Ideal and the realisation of Truth lies in this that the former may be merely subjective and the latter is objective. In the former the aspiring subject preconceives some Ideal, chooses it as the ultimate end of his pursuit, approaches nearer and nearer to it through self-discipline and ultimately identifies himself with or becomes absorbed in it. Here the *sādhaka* attains

self-fulfilment in the sense that what he made the object of his pursuit has become so vividly present to his concentrated mind and has taken so complete hold of his mind that he experiences and thinks of nothing else and does not even distinguish himself from it at that stage, and that even after the state of deep meditation and perfect concentration of the mind is lost his entire outlook on himself and all other persons and things and phenomena is coloured by it. What was originally a subjective ideal, in consequence of the constant thought of it as objectively real and the deep meditation upon it as such, appears to the mind as the most vivid object of the direct experience and as the ultimate reality beyond which there is nothing to be known. In the earlier stages it was nothing more than a subjective concept, because the self and the world of normal experience were then accepted as real; but in course of *sādhanā* the mind is continually persuaded to look upon that concept as truly real and the normal experience as inherently erroneous, and thus the nature of the mind is progressively changed, and ultimately the plane of normal experience is wholly transcended, the mental outlook is radically transformed and the chosen concept is experienced as real. If this subjective interpretation of the transcendental experience of the *sādhaka*, who has reached the highest stage of meditation, be accepted, the differences among the realisations of different *sādhakas* may be reasonably accounted for. From this standpoint it can be reasonably expected that the sincere and devoted *sādhakas* starting with the same conceptual ideal, trained in the same school of thought and practice and moving onward in the same path of reflection and meditation, should ultimately be blessed according to psychological laws with the same kind of realisation or spiritual experience; while those who belong to other sects, accept other ideals, receive

training in other systems of thought and practice and adopt other courses of meditation and contemplation should naturally arrive in the end of their progress at other kinds of spiritual experience. The whole course of *sādhanā* should be regarded as a systematic process of mind-transformation with a view to the realisation of and self-identification with some chosen subjective ideal, which may be different for different religious schools. Such *sādhanā* and *siddhi* are of great practical importance for the *sādhakas* concerned, but the result attained should not be mistaken for the knowledge of the Absolute Reality, as It is in Itself.

But in objective Truth-realisation it is the Truth which should reveal itself to the subject as it really is independently of the nature of the subject. In this it is not the ideal already chosen by the subject that should be objectified and appear as real owing to the concentration of the mind upon it and the vividness of experience; but in this the ultimate Reality, existing independently of the thoughts and feelings and cravings of the individual mind, should,—when the mind is free from impurities and prejudices and attachments and restlessnesses of all kinds and becomes perfectly transparent and receptive,—reflect Itself in Its essential character upon it. The Ideal-realisation is conditioned by the nature and choice of the subject, while the Truth-realisation is conditioned by nothing but the character of the object. Hence the ideal-realisations may be different for different types of *Sādhakas*, but there is absolutely no reason why Truth-realisation should be different in different cases. The divergences found in the testimony of the greatest saints of different sects with regard to the nature of Absolute Truth can with due respect to all of them be accounted for either by

holding that there are numerous Absolute Truths or by maintaining that the Absolute Truth has different natures or by asserting that different partial aspects of the one Absolute Truth are revealed to particular types of saints, the Absolute Truth in Its complete nature being unknown to all.

All these alternatives are of course stubbornly denied by all the sects, each sect claiming that the greatest saints belonging to it alone must be regarded as of the highest order and that what they have realised must be accepted as the Absolute Truth. Such claims can only give rise to conflicts among the sects, and the claim of none can be submitted to without convincing rational grounds. If, however, any exponent of Truth-realisation, without any sectarian bias, wants to put a stop to these conflicts and to establish peace and harmony among all the sects, he must somehow account for the different versions of Absolute Truth given by different sectarian scriptures and Truth-seers and must therefore accept some one of the alternative explanations suggested above. But none of them appears to be acceptable without violence to reason. To say that there are numerous Absolute Truths involves an obvious self-contradiction, because it contradicts the very meaning of Absolute Truth. That the same Absolute Truth has different natures is equally self-contradictory, because the Absolute Truth and its nature cannot be differentiated. If differentiation were possible, then the so-called different natures would be merely different forms of appearance of the Absolute Truth and the acquaintance with any of these would not mean the direct realisation of the Truth itself; the Absolute Truth would in that case transcend all these appearances and remain unknown. The differentiation between Truth and its nature being not possible, the

realisation of different natures necessarily means the realisation of different Absolute Truths, and this is obviously meaningless. The third alternative, viz. that different partial aspects of the One Absolute Truth are revealed to particular types of saints, is also unacceptable. First, whether the Absolute Truth can at all have so many different partial aspects is open to question. Secondly, if different aspects are assumed, the relation between them and the Truth it would be difficult to determine. Thirdly, if the Absolute Truth really possesses different aspects, these aspects cannot certainly be mutually contradictory. But it has been noticed that the views expounded by different sectarian scriptures and teachars are in many cases quite incompatible with each other and cannot be rationally accepted even as representing different partial aspects of the same Reality. Fourthly, even if the experience of partial aspects of Truth be acceded to, it cannot be regarded as the realisation of the Absolute Truth, because a partial aspect of Truth is not Truth itself and to regard an aspect of Truth as the whole Truth is a gross error and must be due to ignorance. Such erroneous experience cannot certainly be regarded as true or perfect knowledge and cannot certainly destroy ignorance, bondage and sorrow and lead to liberation. Fifthly, when the highest state of *Jnāna-Sādhanā* is reached, when the mind becomes perfectly purified and concentrated and transparent, there is no reason why the Absolute should reveal only some partial aspect to the spiritual experience of the *Sādhaka* and should retain His ignorance with regard to the other aspects. If, however, this is accepted as possible, it must be admitted that partial truth-realisation does not enable the *sādhaka* to get rid of ignorance and therefore the apparent bondage and limitations and sorrows should

continue to afflict him. Thus in whatever way we may try to explain the divergences among the highest spiritual experiences of the greatest saints of different sects, while sticking to the doctrine of Truth-realisation, we are led to the unpleasant conclusion that all of them cannot be regarded as having realised the Absolute Truth and got rid of ignorance, bondage and sorrow.

The same difficulties arise, when we try to regard all the recognised scriptures of the various religious sects as giving knowledge of Absolute Truth, wholly or partially. Each scripture presents us with an idea of Truth, which it proclaims as the highest, the most comprehensive, the absolute. These ideas of Absolute Truth, furnished by the different sectarian scriptures, are found to be in many cases mutually contradictory. In whatever way we may seek to explain away these differences, we cannot establish that all of them fully and adequately represent the complete and perfect nature of the same Absolute Truth. Hence it cannot be rationally asserted that in the light of each of them as the final authority a *sādhaka* can perfectly emancipate himself from ignorance, bondage, limitation and sorrow.

There is thus only one course left open to a rational Truth-seeker and believer in Truth-realisation, viz. to ascertain if there is adequate rational grouud for accepting any particular scripture as the verbal embodiment of Absolute Truth and recognising the spiritual experience of any particular type of saints as the perfect realisation of Absolute Truth, though such ascertainment may involve some amount of disrespect to the claims of other scriptures and other types of saints. The adoption of this rational method would logically imply that the nature of Absolute

Truth cannot be ascertained either on the authority of any scripture nor on the evidence of the spiritual realisation of any saint or prophet, but that the objective validity of the sayings of every scripture and the intuitions or spiritual experiences of every saint or prophet from the standpoint of Absolute Truth must be ascertained or repudiated by examining them in accordance with the generally recognised logical principles.

Thus our foregoing discussion has led us to the inevitable necessity of accepting either of these two positions,—viz, (1) either the different teachings of different sectarian scriptures and the different spiritual experiences of the extraordinary saints and prophets of different sects are to be accepted and respected as having great subjective values, as satisfying the moral and aesthetic and spiritual needs of different classes of men born with different dispositions and capacities and brought up under the influences of different kinds of environment and education, (2) or their mutually conflicting claims to ultimate objective validity are to be subjected to strict logical tests and those which satisfy them should be accepted and the others should be rejected. If the second viewpoint is adopted, our respect for personalities or communities or scriptures should not be allowed to influence our judgment and reasoning. It should be borne in mind that from the standpoint of subjective values, all of them may be recognised as true, good and beautiful and leading to a blissful state of mind, though they may not be capable of being accepted and put into practice by the same person at the same time; but from the standpoint of objective truth the mutually incompatible experiences and views cannot be regarded as equally true. Standards of value may be

allowed to be different for different types of men, but standards of Truth cannot be allowed to differ in cases of different sects of people. The same reality may be felt and enjoyed differently by different men ; but if it is known differently by different men, the knowledge of all of them cannot be regarded as true. True knowledge of a Reality must establish itself by the refutation of all other views about it.

Now, in the earlier stages of our enquiry we have tried to give a brief exposition of most of the widely accepted and powerfully advocated doctrines about the essential nature of the Absolute Reality and we have attempted at an impartial critical examination of each of those doctrines in accordance with the logical principles recognised by the advocates themselves. As a result of our examination we have found that each of them is beset with insurmountable logical difficulties and none of them can be accepted as standing on unassailable rational grounds. It has been generally found that the advocates of every system make merciless use of their sharp logical weapons in their attempts at killing other systems ; but whenever placed under the painful necessity of defending their own systems against the similar attacks of others, they almost invariably fail to hold their own by means of logical reasoning and appeal to their own scripture and to the realisation of their own prophets and thus commit the fallacy of arguing in a circle. It must of course be admitted that in the light of logical criticism some views are found to contain comparatively grosser and cruder elements and some are more refined and enlightened, that some go ahead of others in the application of logical principles. But there is no convincing rational ground for accepting any one of the views as exclusively representing the complete nature of Absolute Truth.

In the beginning of the discussion of the present topic it has been noted that the very foundation of *Jnāna-sādhanā* is that I do not know myself to be what I truly am, that my present knowledge of myself and the world is not true knowledge, but illusion or product of Ignorance, that when I know myself truly I should realise that I have no bondage and sorrow, and thus I should become actually emancipated from the apparent bondage and sorrow which I have been experiencing through ignorance. The true nature of my self is of course inseparably connected with the true nature of the world and the ultimate ground of this world. Hence unless it can be established that the true nature of my self is such that it has no bondage and sorrow, the foundation of *Jnāna-sādhanā* becomes weakened and the objective ground of the ultimate fruitfulness of this *sādhanā* becomes questionable. But, as stated above, the critical examination of each of the views about the true nature of the self and the concomitant views about the true nature of the world and its ultimate Ground, on which *Jnāna-sādhanā* is based, has shown that none of them can be rationally established beyond range of doubt. Thus the possibility of the atainment of final liberation by means of the acquisition of true knowledge of Reality through *Jnāna-sādhanā* remains a controvertible question.

The critic may not stop here. He may further ask: can the advocates of the different systems explain the possibility of what they call truth-realisation consistently even with their own respective doctrines? Take the case of those who hold that Absolute Void is the Absolute Truth. At the stage when the supposed Ignorance is destroyed, there is, according to the doctrine, nothing that can be called existent, no subject to experience and no object to be experienced, no self-conscious entity that can be regarded

as itself the subject as well as the object of experience. How can there be at that stage any experience at all? We cannot conceive of any experience or realisation or intuition or whatever it may be called without a subject-object relation, without a relation between the knower and the known, even though the knower and the known be the same identical person. The self being, according to this theory, nothing but a series of momentary consciousnesses, it is inconceivable how the momentary consciousnesses, which die as soon as they are born, can have any ideal to realise, can go through any self-discipline, can receive any instruction from another self, can even have any self-consciousness or even the experience of themselves as the members of a continuous series. Even if these are supposed to be possible through the mysterious power of Ignorance, so long as Ignorance continues, experience and knowledge and consciousness may be regarded as possible, and when Ignorance is absent, experience, knowledge and consciousness are no more. Hence true knowledge, or the knowledge of Absolute Truth, in the sense of knowledge without ignorance, appears to be meaningless. If in the absence of Ignorance there is truly Absoulte Void, there must of course be none to witness this Void, and thus truth-realisation becomes impossible. If on the other hand the self directly experiences the Absolute Void, both must be existent, whether the two be different or identical. Even if the ultimate experience itself be merely a subject-object-less changeless differenceless consciousness, which is interpreted as the experience of Absolute Void (meaning the non-existence of the mind, the body, the world, the bondage and sorrow, etc.) as the Absolute Truth, then also it must be admitted that the changeless consciousness or conscious self is not destroyed or proved to be illusory. Thus Truth-realisation, according to this doctrine, seems to be impossible.

Take again the case of the school which holds that selves are really innumerable functionless attributeless unrelated self-luminous permanent entities, and that the self-existent unconscious *Prakriti* being modified in the presence of the selves non-discriminated from it becomes the source of the consciousness of individuality and all intellectual and mental functions as well as of the objective world. Now, consistently with this doctrine knowledge and ignorance must both belong to Intelligence, which is evolved from *Prakriti*. If true knowledge of the self as discriminated from *Prakriti* and of *Prakriti* as distinguished from the self is attainable, it must be attained by Intelligence, because the self has no function whatsoever. That is to say, the self and the *Prakriti* and their distinction must then be objects of the direct experience of Intelligence at the stage of deep meditation. This is certainly inadmissible and inconsistent with the doctrine, because neither *Prakriti* nor the self can possibly be the objects of the experience of a product of the unconscious *Prakriti*. If they are merely cognised through inference, the claim of truth-realisation has to be abandoned. If the intuitive experience of the self and *Prakriti* by Intelligence be admitted, the existence of Intelligence at that stage must be recognised, and therefore the conjunction through non-discrimination between the self and *Prakriti* must also be recognised as present at that time of perfect knowledge. Consequently, there can never be separation between them through true knowledge and hence liberation would be impossible. If the separation be accounted for as the result of *Vairágya* or indifference of the self to *Prakriti* after the true knowledge is attained, then this *Vairágya* must be regarded either as the function of Intelligence or of the self. If Intelligence be indifferent to *Prakriti*, it

cannot lead to the liberation of the self from the apparent conjunction with *Prakriti*, for the presence of Intelligence itself proves their conjunction. If on the other hand the self is supposed to exercise the function, it cannot be essentially functionless. Thus the realisation of Absolute Truth aud the attainment of liberation through it in consequence of *Jnāna-sādhanā* is found to be inexplicable in accordance with this doctrine.

Take again the case of those who regard the selves and the world as organically related to Brahman and as inseparable, though distinguishable from Him. Here also the question would arise whether in the highest stage of meditation a self can have direct experience of Brahman, the Absolute Reality. If the direct experience of Brahman by the self is admitted, various inconsistencies in the doctrine become palpable. First, this experience, as distinguished from the previous non-experience, must consist either in the modification of the self itself or in the modification of the mind associated with the self, because without some modification there cannot be any transition from non-experience to experience. The admission of the modification of the self would involve various logical difficulties ; it would involve the necessity of recognising another transcendent witness of its modification, and further in that case in the state of liberation also the self would have to be regarded as continuously modifying itself for preserving its knowledge of Brahman. If on the other hand the knowledge of Brahman is attained through the modification of the mind, the self can never exist apart from relation to the mind, because apart from relation to the mind the self's knowledge of Brahman would be impossible. If the self's relation to the mind be so essential, there cannot be any realisation of the true nature

of the self as transcendent above and distinguished from the mind. If this realisation also pertains to the mind, then the modifying mind has to be regarded as the subject and the self as the object of its knowledge ; how can in that case the self liberate itself from bondage and sorrow ? Further, if the self and Brahman be the objects of the knowledge of the mind, neither of them can be logically conceived as a self-luminous or self-conscious being. If, again, an individual self itself is regarded as intuitively experiencing itself, the other selves and the world of unconscious mental and material objects to be organically united within the self-conscious nature of Brahman, then Brahman, the diversities of the world, the plurality of selves and the experiencing self itself must at the same time be the *objects* of the knowledge of this individual self, so that their relation may be cognised by it. This is of course grossly inconsistent with the conception of Brahman and self, as cherished by this school. Thus this school also cannot rationally substantitate the possibility of the direct experience of what it conceives as the Absolute Truth.

With regard to their doctrine of *Parā-Bhakti* (the highest love for Brahman) at the liberted state, it is difficult to concevie how the self, when it is absolutely dissociated from the body and the mind, can cherish any feeling or emotion or any personal relationship with the Absolute Reality. *Bhakti* involves personal relationship and personal intercourse. But the self and Brahman, in their true essential characters, cannot be regarded, even according to this doctrine, as persons with personal feelings and emotions, because these would involve modifications in their natures, and changes of states as pertaining to the Ultimate Reality. In that case, there would be little

difference between mundane existence due to ignorance and the supra-mundane existence revealed in truth-realisation, except some difference in form and degree.

Let us now pass on to the system which has laid greatest emphasis upon *Jnāna-Sādhanā* and Truth-realisation,—viz. the system according to which the differenceless attributeless self-luminous Brahman alone is real and all subjects and objects of experience are unreal. Can there be any realisation of Absolute Truth consistently with the metaphysical doctrine of this school ? It holds that the Absolute Truth is Brahman, and in the nature of Brahman there can be no difference between subject and object and hence no knowledge or experience in the sense in which we understand it. Brahman is conceived as pure absolute unrelated Existence-Consciousness, and as such He cannot be said to be conscious of Himself as possessing existence and consciousness or as being absolute and unrelated. Such self-consciousness would imply the objectification of Himself and hence a differentiation between Himself as subject and Himself as object as well as possession of attributes. This would be inconsistent with the doctrine. Then again, the self of the *Sādhaka* is conceived as in its true nature Brahman Himself. It is not a case of the relation of identity between self and Brahman for such relation also would involve some element of difference; what is meant is that the self as distinguishable from Brahman does not really exist at all, but that Brahman alone exists, or more precisely Brahman is Existence. Now the question is, how can any individual self (that apparently exists and owing to the apparent existence of which the problem of truth-realisation and *Mukti*-liberation from bondage-arises) realise, i, e. directly experience itself as such attributeless Brahman ? If the self,

even in the state of the deepest meditation, attains in any form the knowledge of Brahman or the knowledge of itself as Brahman, some sort of subject-object-relation and hence some sort of subtle difference must be present at that stage. If such knowledge be accepted as the realisation of Absolute Truth, then this relation of identity in difference or difference in identity between self and Brahman must be admitted to belong to the real nature of the Absolute Reality. But this is not admitted by the exponents of this doctrine. According to this school every form of difference and relation belongs to the domain of Ignorance, which veils the true nature of Brahman. Hence every kind of knowledge or experience, which involves any form of difference or relation, must be a product of Ignorance and therefore illusory. Consistently with this doctrine, the knowledge or experience which the self may attain even in the state of the deepest meditation must also be regarded as within the apparent creation of Ignorance and therefore a knowledge in which the true nature of the Absolute Reality is veiled and appears in a distorted form. That is to say, this experience cannot be regarded as the realisation of Absolute Truth. It may be asserted that there is a still deeper state of meditation in which this experience also is suppressed or transcended, in which no phenomenal knowledge or consciousness involving subject-object-relation is present, in which the self is revealed in its true character, i. e. the attributeless Brahman shines in its etetnal self-luminous existence. If this assertion is accepted, then also the realisation of Absolute Truth is not established. As soon as Ignorance disappears, knowledge also disappears. As soon as an individual self transcends Ignorance, it transcends its individual-selfhood as well, it loses its self-consciousness as well as consciousness of any other entity,

and it exists as pure attributeless differenceless Consciousness. Such being the case, there is no possibility of the self's true knowledge of itself or Brahman at any stage.

Let us put the difficulty in another form. Is the alleged truth-realisation a form of phenomenal consciousness or is it a function of pure noumenal changeless Consciousness itself ? If the second alternative be accepted, it cannot properly be called knowledge, because this consciousness has not the property of even being conscious of itself. If consciousness were a self-conscious Being, It would not be absolutely without any attribute and without any difference within Itself. Further, in that case Consciousness would have to be regarded as having been subject to Ignorance and devoid of self-consciousness before the attainment of this state of truth-realisation, and as being conscious of Itself in Its true character through some form of self-discipline. This would involve some real modification in the nature of this consciousness, and this is grossly inconsistent with the doctrine. If, again, truth-realisation means not any knowledge in the sense in which we can understand it, but merely the shining of the transcendent attributeless changeless consciousness in Its eternal self-luminous nature, then also it would not serve the purpose in view. This Consciousness must consistently with the doctrine be regarded as eternally shining in Its self-luminous nature, even when the illusory experiences and their illusory objects produced by Ignorance are present. The illusory individuals that suffer from the illusory bondage and sorrow due to illusory experiences in this illusory world caused by unreal Ignorance gain nothing by this real eternal self-shining of the Substratum Consciousness and their illusory *sādhanā* for self-emancipation from the illusory bondage and sorrow

goes in vain. If in this view of the case *sādhanā* leads an individual to any result, that result must be self-destruction,—the destruction of the individuality without the actual achievement of any goal, without the attainment of any liberation and bliss. Moreover, when the individual *sādhaka*, having arrived at this stage of temporary self-abnegation in the deepest meditation, comes down to any lower plane or the state of normal experience and becomes conscious of his individuality, he is not expected to carry with him the slightest impression of the so-called truth-realisation or the self-shining of the attributeless Consciousness, because he as an individual had no taste of it. Consequently no individual saint is entitled to bear witness to such Absolute Truth.

If on the other hand the first of the above-mentioned alternatives be accepted and truth-realisation be regarded as a particular form of phenomenal consciousness, then the question is, whether this form of phenomenal consciousness is a function or state of the mind or of the self. If this phenomenon of truth-realisation be regarded as belonging to the self, the self must be conceived as a modifying self passing through different states, performing different functions, having sometimes false knowledge and sometimes true knowledge, feeling the pangs of bondage and sorrow and seeking liberation from them, undergoing various sorts of discipline and then attaining the knowledge of itself as changeless attributeless Brahman. This is evidently self-contradictory. If on the other hand truth-realisation is of the nature of mental modification, Brahman or Self must be conceived as an object, upon which the mind in its cognitive aspect can operate and the mind must be conceived as existing after the destruction or disappearance of Ignorance. Both of these are inconsistent with the doctrine

The mind can never make Brahman or Self an object of its knowledge, the mind itself being illumined by the luminosity of Brahman or Self. If it be held that the mind being illumined by Brahman feels or realises that it is Brahman that illumines it and thereby becomes conscious of the self-luminous self-existent character of Brahman, then also it must be admitted that the mind can know Brahman as the illuminer of itself and therefore as a relative qualified functioning Being and not as the absolute attributeless non-dual Reality. Moreover, the mind and all possible objects of its expereince are regarded by this school as the products of Ignorance on the substratum of Brahman. Hence so long as the mind operates, the true nature of Brahman must be regarded as veiled by Ignorance and therefore the Absolute Truth remains unrealisable. On the other hand, when the mind ceases to operate or disappears with the disappearance of Ignorance, the phenomenon of realisation becomes impossible. Further, it is held that Ignorance can be destroyed only by the true knowledge of Absolute Truth and also that Absolute Truth can realise Itself in Its eternal unveiled nature only when Ignorance is destroyed. This involves the fallacy of Interdependence, and hence the conclusion would be that Ignorance can never be destroyed and Absolute Truth can never be realised. The Root-Ignorance being the eternal source of the individual minds which make Brahman appear as individual selves, cannot possibly be destroyed by any operation or experience of the minds, because their very existence presupposes the existence of that Ignorance.

Nor can that Ignorance be destroyed by Brahman, because it is the self-luminous nature of Brahman that eternally sustains the inexplicable existence of Ignorance. Moreover, Ignorance, though

supported by Brahman and veiling Its real nature, does never truly exist to and for It; it exists only to and for the minds which are the products of Ignorance. Hence the question of Brahman becoming liberated from the veil of Ignorance by bringing about its destruction does not arise at all.

Thus there is no rational way in which we can understand the nature of what is called Truth-realisation or the direct knowledge of the non-dual attributeless Brahman. (see pages 465–469.)

CHAPTER IX.

The Ultimate Goal of Human Life and The Conception of Liberation.

Every religious system seeks to form a definite conception about the ultimate goal of human life, which being attained there should be nothing further to search after, nothing more to know or to do or to hope for. The fundamental assumption underlying this idea is that life in this world is neither for its own sake nor for nothing, that life does not appear in this phenomenal system only to disappear in due course as an incident like the other incidents of the physical world, but that life is manifested in order to fulfil some definite purpose in this cosmic plan. It is only in the stage of humanity that life becomes self-conscious and self-determining. Hence man is expected to fulfil the mission of life through self-conscious and self-determined efforts. Man's voluntary efforts are directed towards the culture of knowledge and pursuit of truth, the performance of actions and the production of desirable changes in his environments, the play of emotions and the enjoyment of happiness. But in no case are the efforts made for their own sake without any purpose in view. Knowledge seeks fulfilment in the attainment of truth, action seeks fulfilment in the attainment of what is regarded as good, emotion and enjoyment seek fulfilment in the attainment of beauty and bliss. The efforts in the direction of knowledge should cease when the highest truth is known and there is nothing more to know ; those in the direction of action should cease when the highest good is realised and there is nothing more to do ; those in the

direction of enjoyment should cease when the highest beauty and bliss are enjoyed and there is nothing further to enjoy. Thus when the ultimate purposes of all efforts are achieved, the mission of life in this phenomenal world is fulfilled; there is no further necessity for the continuance of efforts and therefore for the continuity of life in this phenomenal world. But since every living being has an individuality and a mission of individual life, the fulfilment of the mission of life in the case of one individual releases that individual only from the troublesome journey in this diversified world and does not affect the presence of innumerble other lives in it. Hence the world-process and the efforts of lives in it go on through eternity inspite of the liberation of particular lives from it.

Now, religion consists in the systematic discipline of all human efforts in the direction of the absolute fulfilment of knowledge, action and enjoyment, the perfect attainment of absolute truth, absolute good and absolute beauty and bliss, and thereby the absolute liberation from the bondage of mundane life. But the intelligence of man is perplexed by the question as to what is the nature of absolute truth, absolute good, absolute beauty and absolute bliss, and what the absolute liberation from the bondage of individual mundane life consists in, as well as by the question as to the most appropriate and effective course of religious discipline, which should be adopted for the attainment of this ultimate goal of human life. While searching for the true answer to such questions, the human intelligence arrives at different conclusions. Accordingly, different religious systems grow in the human society. The differences among these systems consist in their different conceptions about the nature of the Absolute Reality,—about the ultimate nature of God, the self and the world-system,—

about the true nature of the ultimate good of life, about the true nature of the ultimate beauty and bliss to be enjoyed, about the true character of bondage and sorrow and of absolute liberation from them, and about the most suitable and infallible method of fulfilling the ultimate mission of life. Since these questions are interrelated, the answers to them also are interrelated. Accordingly in every system of religion we find specific ideas about the Absolute Reality, the ultimate goal of life and the course of moral and spiritual discipline.

We have already dealt with the diverse metaphysical ideas of the various religious systems with regard to the nature of God, the self and the world, and the variety of methods of religious discipline chosen by them. Here we propose to discuss their conceptions of liberation and the highest goal of human life.

1. We have found that according to some schools of thought this everchanging world of sense-perception is the true reality and this gross bodily organism in the true self. They do not recognise the existence of God or any other supersensuous and unchangeable reality behind and as the ground of this world of phenomena. They do not recognise the existence of any self independent of this body and hence the continuity of the existence of any individual after the death of his body. According to these schools, it is the religious duty of every individual to make the fullest use of the opportunities as they come to him and to create further opportunities by dint of his efforts for the maximum enjoyment of sensuous pleasure throughout the course of this bodily life and for the enjoyment of sound health, robust physique, fearless movement in the world, supermacy over other creatures, and so on. For this

purpose he should also employ his wisdom and power for the materialistic improvement of his environments, upon which his own enjoyment greatly depends. He should exercise self-control and cultivtae self-discipline in order that his power for enjoyment may be retained throughout life. He should contribute to the happiness of others, for otherwise he should be deprived of their co-operation, without which he cannot by dint of any efforts of his own live a happy life. Thus, according to this view, liberation means freedom from the sorrows and troubles of this life as far as practicable, and religion consists in leading a well-regulated life guided by prudence for the continuous enjoyment of happiness. When death comes in due course, there is an absolute end of life. " Dust thou art, to dust returnest "; don't think of any future life, of heaven or hell, or any return to this earth.

2. Secondly, we have found that some religious schools hold that the true nature of the self consists in the continuous series of momentary consciousness, that the world also is a series of momentary objects appearing to these consciousnesses, that there does not exist any permanent self within or any permanent substance outside, and that there is no God, personal or impersonal, as the eternal Cause or Ground or Sustainer of this phenomenal world. According to this view, it is this truth which has to be realised through disciplined knowledge. It is due to Ignorance that the notion of a permanent self is said to arise and reign in the everchanging consciousnesses and a permanent world is said to appear in experience. The idea of God is regarded as an unnecessary hypothesis, formed out of a wrong notion of the law of Causality. So long as such Ignorance continues, the idea of individuality remains and there are experiences of births and deaths, which are

governed by the *law of karma*. When Ignorance is destroyed, the false idea of individuality and the permanency of the self vanishes, the consciousness of oneself as the knower, the actor, the enjoyer and the sufferer disappears, and then there is nothing to know, nothing to do, nothing to enjoy or to suffer. This is the ultimate end of life and this is called *Nirvāna* or extinguishment of the lamp of life. Liberation thus consists in *Nirvāṇa*, in which there is the complete cessation of individual existence. In *Nirvāna*, there can be no question of joy or sorrow, of knowledge or ignorance, of good or evil, because there is no conscious subject to experience them, no existent being as the seat of them. Appropriate modes of moral and spiritual discipline are prescribed for reaching this ultimate goal of life by the systems advocating this view (See pages 109-126).

3. Some other religious systems have been found to maintain that the self is a permanent conscious entity limited in space and of the size of the body in the embodied state, but capable of retaining its existence and rising to higher and higher planes of experience in the disembodied state. In the ordinary human plane (*Lokākāśa*) the self is agreeably and disagreeably affected by the changing bodily and mental experiences and suffers from bondage and misery and various kinds of limitations. The aim of the knowing, feeling and active life of man is progressively to dissociate the self from the body and to make it ascend to higher and higher planes of experience through the cultivation of suitable thoughts, feelings and actions; and the ultimate end of the self's journey in the world is the attainment of permanent and absolute rest and peace and infinite happiness in the highest superhuman and supra-mundane plane (*alokākāśa*). It is held that this

blissful state of experience pertains to the essential nature of the self, which is veiled in the embodied state and the lower planes of experience, but which is perfectly unveiled in the highest plane as the result of the prescribed course of moral and spiritual discipline. Liberation is by these schools conceived as the permanent self-conscious state of rest, peace and infinite happiness realised by the self in the highest plane of its existence. (Pages 127-130).

4. Some other religious schools conceive the self as an infinitely small (atomic) eternal conscious entity, residing in the embodied state in some particular part of the body. This self is regarded as essentially related to, dependent upon and inseparable from God. During its mundane course of existence, it is forgetful of its eternal blissful relationship with God and participates in the limitations and the joys and sorrows of the psycho-physical organism. So long as this ignorance of its eternal relationship with God and its false identification with the psycho-physical organism continues, it passes throught births and deaths and various worldly enjoyments and sufferings. The ultimate end of this wordly life is to realise the self's essential eternal inalienable relationship with and participation in the perfect infinite absolute blissful consciousness of God, and to dwell eternally in the blissful spiritual Kingdom of Heaven in His glorious presence and as a part of Him. This is what liberation from worldly bondage consists in. The cultivation and development of unalloyed love for God is the way to it. (See *Bhakti-Sādhanā*)

5. Some other religious systems again are of opinion that the plurality of selves originated from God or were created by God out of Himself. This means that every individual self is a special self-conscious manifestation of

the infinite eternal absolute Ground of the Universe and as such is different as well as non-different from God. So long as the mundane state of the self continues, the aspect of difference is emphasised in its consciousness, and it is deprived of the blissful consciousness of its unity with God and is subjected to the limited joys and sorrows, conditioned by its relation with the psycho-physical organism. The ultimate end of life is to shake off this consciousness of difference from God and identity with the body, and to realise the essetial unity with Him and eternally participate in the perfection of His nature. This is according to this view the conception of liberation, the ultimate goal of human life. (See *Bhakti-Sādhanā*)

6. Some other schools of thought view each of the innumerable individual selves as an infinite and eternal entity possessed of the attributes of knowledge, will, joy, sorrow, effort etc., and as governed by God in accordance with the *law of karma*. According to them, so long as these attributes are operative in the self, it is related to a mind and as such is under bondage and has to pass through numerous births and deaths and cannot be emancipated from the troubles and responsibilities of worldly life. The final end of the journey of life is the attainment by the self of a state in which it is free from connection with the mind and the operations of all attributes and even of the consciousness of its own existence. (Pages 131-136; 762). According to some again knowledge is the sole attribute of the self; and when the connection with the mind ceases, phenomenal knowledge with which all troubles are associated, is got rid of and it continues to exist in itself in the eternal enjoyment of infinite bliss.

7. Others again think that the selves, though innumerable and distinct from one another, are each

essentially a pure self-luminous entity, attributeless and unrelated, above time and space, untouched by joy and sorrow, unmodified by phenomenal knowledge, will, feeling and action, but somehow associated from time without beginning with the Cosmic Energy, which modifies itself into the individual phenomenal intelligences, egos, minds and senses as well as the material bodies and the objective material universe. The association is regarded as merely of the nature of indiscrimination between the selves and the Energy, as the result of which the operations and modifications as well as the enjoyments and sufferings of the individual intelligences, egos, etc. are falsely attributed to the particular selves. This is what constitutes the bondage of the self. Liberation consists in the dissociation of the self from the Energy and its products and the self's existence in its unrelated unchanged attributeless self-luminous state. This is attained by the true knowledge of the self as distinct from the Energy. (Pages 136-140; 784-785).

8. Others again opine that the selves dissociated from the body and the mind are neither in an unconscious state nor in a joyless and sorrowless, knowledgeless and will-less self-luminous state, but in a state of eternal enjoyment of infinite happiness within their own self-existent nature. This happiness, they hold, belongs to their essential nature, but remains unmanifested in their mundane state ; but in the state of liberation, when the selves are free from phenomenal knowledge and desire and emancipated from the influence of *karma*, there is the full manifestation of this innate happiness. (pages 141 ; 877-879).

9. Some other systems again have ascertained that ultimately there is only one universal Self, which is pure changeless attributeless infinite and self-luminous, and its

which there is absolute identity of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. They hold that this one non-dual absolute Self illusorily appears as a plurality of individual selves in relation to the plurality of phenomenal consciousnesses or minds, which also are non-different from the absolute Self and are the illusory products of Ignorance. All bondage and limitation and sorrow, etc. are regarded as due to this illusion. Each apparent individual self is said to be liberated from bondage, when the illusion vanishes, the ignorance is destroyed and the true knowledge of this self as no other than the infinite eternal absolute Sell, Brahman or God, is perfectly attained. Liberation accordingly means the attainment of Brahman-hood or impersonal God-hood and eternal existence in that non-dual absolute consciousness. (pages 144–147 ; 942).

In this way various conceptions, often mutually conflicting, have been formed by the different religio-metaphysical schools with regard to the ultimate goal of human life. The special courses of moral and spiritual discipline prescribed by the different religious sects are greatly influenced by the ideas cherished by them about the nature of the *Summum bonum*. They not infrequently quarrel with one another on this account. We have previously scrutinised the different views about the nature of the self and of God and have found that none of them can be accepted as the true view free from rational doubts and difficulties. The views about the ultimate goal of life and the true nature of liberation being based on those about the self and God, they also cannot be expected to have any finality. Critical examinations of these views are closely associated with and dependent upon the examinations of the views about the self. Accordingly frequent reference has been made to the idea of liberation,

in course of the criticism of the theories about the self. Here we propose to make some remarks with special reference to the conflicting ideas about Liberation.

Criticism.

The materialistic view of liberation criticised.

1. We may pass by the materialistic conception of the self and the materialistic idea of liberation without any detailed examination. This doctrine, truly speaking, amounts to the denial of existence of the self and the denial of the possibility of liberation. That this idea of the bodily self cannot be consistently maintained has been previously shown. The materialistic view of the self being untenable, the moral and religious theories based upon it must also be discarded as baseless. With regard to the idea of liberation, it is really a very pessimistic doctrine. Man is supposed to be destined to suffer miseries, which he can never hope to get rid of. Hunger and thirst, disease and decay, infirmity and death, etc. are supposed to pertain to the very nature of the self. and man's yearning and endeavour, however earnest, to rise above them and to enjoy unalloyed happiness, are regarded as originating from ignorance about his hard lot of subjection to them and as bound to end in failure. Death is supposed to be the absolute end of life, and in death alone his misfortunes end. Throughout life man has to struggle against various kinds of misery, and throughout life he has to suffer them, the sufferings being occasionally intervened by some amounts of pleasure, which only make the sufferings all the more bitter. A man may hoard vast amounts of wealth, but they can never be enough to satisfy his ambition and to make him happy. A man may become a big emperor, but 'unhappy lies the head that

wears the crown.' Sensuous enjoyments gradually rob the energy and capacity for enjoying, though they make the desires for pleasure keener and keener. Thus a man can never satisfy himself through search of sensuous pleasure. To hold that man ought to accept this subjection to misery as pertaining to his essential nature is pessimism of the worst type. The innermost consciousness of man revolts against this idea. He has the inherent urge to transcend the miseries of bodily life and to enjoy unalloyed happiness. The doctrine under review is inconsistent with this urge. This doctrine virtually denies religion, which owes its origin and sustenance to this innermost demand of human nature for perfect liberation from bondage and sorrow.

2. The Conception of Nirvāṇa Criticised.

The conception of *Nirvāṇa* as the ultimate result of *Sādhanā* is inconsistent with the doctrine of the momentariness of the self, with which it is associated. Every consistent doctrine of *sādhanā* and its ideal must be based on the idea that the same individual should form a conception of the ideal, should undergo a systematic course of self-discipline for its realisation, and should attain the state of this realisation as the fruit of this self-discipline. There is no such permanent individual according to the doctrine of the momentary self. According to this doctrine the self dies as soon as it is born. It has no possibility of conceiving of any ideal of life nor of going through any course of discipline nor of attaining any reward of discipline, because it does not live even for two moments. The self being momentary, when the wished-for ideal of life presents itself, the self does not exist, and when it is in existence, the ideal cannot be realised. In truth, according to this theory,

there is none to suffer bondage and misery, none to be inspired by the ideal of liberation, none to pursue to the ideal and none to realise it.

The exponents of the doctrine may argue that there is something which is of the nature of a continuous flow (सन्तान) running through all these successive intelligences (सन्तानि). This continuous flow of intelligences, assuming the form of the consciousness of a permanent self, becomes the sufferer of sorrows, the aspirant for getting rid of them, and the practiser of *sādhanā*. As the ultimate result of this *sādhanā*, the flow of intelligences ceases, the consciousness of a permanent self is destroyed and the sorrows vanish. This is *Nirvāṇa*, the highest goal. But the cessation of the continuous flow of intelligences, in which the continued life of an individual consists, cannot be the object of desire and effort of the successive intelligences, because they become lost just after their production without the necessity for any means to be adopted. So these intelligences cannot be regarded as performing *sādhanā* and attaining its result. Nor can the cessation of the flow be the object of desire of the flow itself, because annihilation of one's own self cannot be the object of one's desire.

The advocates may say that *Nirvāṇa* does not consist in the total annihilation of the flow of intelligences, but the destruction of desire and ignorance which make the flow beset with sorrow and the production of a flow perfectly free from desire and ignorance and sorrow. But this also does not remove the illogicality of the doctrine. According to this doctrine, the very individuality of a person consists in the flow of intelligences held together by desire and ignorance and beset with consequent sorrow; and in the absence of these, the flow itself would completely cease. If

any fresh flow of intelligences without desire, ignorance and sorrow can at all be produced, it can have no relation with the former and cannot be regarded as the reward for the *sādhanā* of the former.

Advocate:—This criticism is beside the mark. There is no complete break in the continuity of the flow of intelligences from the sorrowful state to the sorrowless state. These are modifications in the nature of the flow, according to the *Law of Karma*, even when it is governed by desire and ignorance; there are different grades of sorrow and happiness experienced by it. This modification in the direction of destruction of ignorance and sorrow goes on with the progress of *Sādhanā*, until ignorance and sorrow are completely destroyed and the flow becomes blissful.

Critic:—This interpretation of *Nirvāna* evidently amounts to your shifting the ground and virtual admission that your original conception of *Nirvāna* as the annihilation of self cannot logically stand. The present interpretation implies that individuality of the *Sādhaka* continues, even after ignorance and desire and consequent sorrow are completely destroyed, through the blissful flow of intelligences. But this conception of the blissful stream of consciousness of the same individual after the destruction of ignorance and desire is incompatible with your doctrine of the momentariness of the self and the inalienable connection between individuality and ignorance–desire–sorrow. When ignorance and desire and sorrow are destroyed, individuality is annihilated. The supposed blissful flow of intelligences, if any, can have no connection with the afore-said sorrowful flow of intelligences and cannot therefore be regarded as the result of the *Sādhanā* of the latter. The logical implication of your present interpretation of *Nirvāna* would be that

there is one permanent indestructible self underlying the states of sorrow and joy, desire and desirelessness, ignorance and knowledge, and passing as a result of the systematic *Sādhanā* from the conditions of sorrow, desire and ignorance to the ideal condition of bliss, desirelessness and perfect knowledge. But this is certainly not admissible to you. Consequently, you are logically bound to abandon this interpretation of *Nirvāna* as well.

Moreover, you cannot prove that the flow is separate from the successive intelligences. For example, there is nothing called the line of ants separate from the individual ants moving one after another in the line. In any current of flame or water also, there is nothing, named flow, which is different from the moving individual particles of fire or water. No one experiences the flow as different from successive intelligences, as is found in the case of a garland, in which a thread runs through the succession of flowers. So there is no such thing as the flow of intelligence distinct from the succession of intelligences. Moreover, the question is: is the flow of those successive intelligences self-luminous or illumined by other ? The first alternative is unacceptable. If the flow is different from the successive intelligences, then it cannot be self-luminous, because it is not itself intelligence. If it is non-different from the successive intelligences, then owing to its being momentary, the flow itself will not be possible. The second alternative is not also tenable. If the illuminer of the flow be any momentary intelligence, it cannot possibly illumine what precedes or follows it, and in the absence of the possibility of successive units being illumined together, the consciousness of a flow cannot arise at all. Hence it cannot illumine the flow. In one moment, the flow is not experienced by anyone. If that illumination of the flow is accepted

as non-momentary, then your theory will collapse; and if that also is known by another, then there will be an infinite regression; and if that is self-luminous, then your view will not be upheld. Hence the flow cannot be said to be either different or non-different from successive intelligences. Besides, if the flow (सन्तान) is taken as other than the successive individual intelligences (सन्तानि) which are momentary, then it will be without support, and so either it will not be established or will be illusory. If it is non-different from those individual units, then as owing to their being momentary, they are destroyed as soon as produced, so also the flow must be immediately destroyed. That is to say, there should be no flow at all. So owing to the momentariness of intelligences, there will be none to attain liberation.

Moreover, if the flow of worldly existence of intelligences stops at some point, as the doctrine of *Nirvāna* supposes, it would, according to this school of thought, logically amount to the denial of the existence of all knowledge. Existence, in the view of this school, consists in the capacity to produce activity or to become the cause of some effect. Now the last moment of the flow of successive worldly existences of momentary intelligences cannot be regarded as existent at all, because it has not the capacity of causing activity. Thus the last moment becomes non-existent, and in this way right back to the original source, all will be non-existent. Let us make the point clear. From the knowledge which is of the nature of the last moment, no effect will be produced; hence it will not give rise to any action and therefore its existence also, according to this view, will not be established. If that ceases to exist, then knowledge previous to it will also be non-existent, because it cannot be the producer of something existent. In this way

all previous knowledges will prove to be non-existent. Hence to account for the possibility of knowledge, the destruction of the flow of knowledge in *Nirvāṇa* can not be maintained. On the other hand, if the last moment is regarded as initiating some effect, it will not be the last, and because it ceases to be the last, there will be no cessation of the flow and hence no destruction of sorrow. The last moment of knowledge being accepted, it must be regarded as incapable of producing any effect and hence as non-existent. Accordingly all flow is proved to be non-existent This being the case, the question of its destruction does not arise at all.

Moreover, since there is no abiding self according to the advocate's tehory, *Nirvāna* may be taken either in the sense of the annihilation of the self or in the sense of the attainment of the omniscient flow. But both of these conceptions are untenable.

The annihilation of the self is not conceivable. Here the question may be put : will the annihilation be at the time of the existence of the self or at the time of its non-existence. The first is evidently self-contradictory, owing to the presence of the self. The second alternative is not tenable because it involves the absence of the knowledge of the annihilation.

Now about the attainment of the omniscient flow. Here it may be asked whether the relation between the self and the omniscient flow is conjunction or identity (non-difference). If the first is the case, then it will terminate in disjunction ; so there will again be the loss of liberation . If the second is admitted, then either the self will be included in the omniscient flow or the omniscient flow will be included within it. If the first is the case,

then there will be the absence of its own self. If the second is the case, then the omniscient flow will be no more. Moreover, as the flow of momentary intelligences is beset with distress, the all-knowing flow will share a worse state; i e. the all-knowing flow will have a form of knowledge which will be characterised by all distress; hence it will have more distress than even the mundane flow and therefore would be most miserable. Moreover, because the flow is not different from successive intelligences, the all-knowing flow will also be perishable. If it is imperishable, then it will be permanent, so the theory of momentariness will be overthrown. Moreover, it is not possible for one to become an entity of an opposite nature. If the previous nature remains intact, then it cannot merge into that other nature, and if the previous nature is lost. then there will be none to merge. In other words, one cannot be identical with another different from itself. If difference remains or if it does not, in both cases identity cannot be achieved; in the first case, it will be hindered, and in the second, it will terminate as the negation of either.

The above discussion shows that the advocate's conception of the ultimate ideal of life and the possibility of its realisation is incapable of being logically justified.

3. The Conception of rising to a higher region and enjoyment of unveiled happiness Criticised.

Now let us examine the view that liberation consists in the enjoyment of permanent infinite bliss in the highest superhuman and supra-mundane plane (*alokākāśa*). Here the question is,—does the self rise to a special *ākāśa* in its own essential disembodied state or in its corporel state? If the first alternative be accepted, then it should be asked

whether the self by itself is limited or unlimited*. If it is conceived as unlimited, then the alternative cannot logically stand. If the all-pervading infinity of the individual self is allowed, then it cannot have any room for passing from one plane to another. The conception of rise and fall implies movement, and the conception of movement is associated with the finite and limited nature of an entity. If the self has an infinite and unlimited nature, it can not be conceived as having any movement from one region to another. Hence the doctrine of the self's passing from the human or empirical region to a superhuman or super-empirical region becomes logically inconsistent with the conception of the unlimited and all-pervading nature of the self. If, on the other hand, the self is acknowledged to be of the limited measure of the body, as it is done by the advocates of this view, then it must be of the nature of an effect, and as such necessarily non-eternal and subject to destruction. So for such a self the attainment of eternal blissful life in a super-empirical plane of existence is not conceivable. The second alternative, namely that the self with some bodily organism attains the higher region of eternal bliss, is not logically consistent, because all bodies are of non-eternal and perishable nature. Moreover, in this case because of its coming in contact with another body, there would occur birth and death in that highest region also and there would be no liberation from changes and sorrows. It cannot be said that as the result of spiritual discipline the self attains or is born into an imperishable body with which it rises to the highest blissful region,

* The advocate considers the self from two view-points—the standpoint of certainty (निश्चयन्याय) and the empirical standpoint (व्यवहारन्याय). According to the former view the individual is reckoned as all-pervading.

because there is no rational ground for believing in the possibility of the existence of a body which is produced, but which is not liable to destruction. No such body is or can possibly be experienced by perception, because all perceivable bodies are composed of gross material elements and are subject to production and destruction. Nor can there be any inference on this point, because all inference with regard to such objects must be grounded on perception. On the contrary, it can be inferred that such a produced body must be perishable, because it is a produced body, as is the case with all other observed bodies. Besides, if any body can at all be supposed to be eternal, then it must be either infinitely great without any parts or infinitely small like an elementary atom, both of which alternatives are not only inconsistent with the conception of a particular body of an individual self, but with the view of body and self accepted by the system under review. Moreover, because the self is admitted to be of the measure of the body and as bodies have no fixed measure and as in different bodies, the decrease and increase of the powers of the self are experienced, the measures and the powers of the self should be recognised as inconstant. So according to the variations of its measure, the self would suffer destruction Though the existence of a thing is acknowledged as long as there is the recognition of the thing, still because of its having parts, it must necessarily be perishable ; so it cannot exist eternally and enjoy eternal bliss. The gainer of the fruit being perishable, there cannot be the attainment of eternally blessed state of existence. Besides, rising higher and remaining in higher regions are actions, and all actions are perishable ; therefore the desire not to return cannot be fulfilled. So the kind of liberation, conceived by these schools, must be non-eternal.

Besides, what is meant by the lower and the higher planes or regions,—by the mundane and the supra-mundane planes ? Are they distinct regions of the same space with which we are acquainted ? or do the supra-mundane planes mean any region beyond this space ? or is the term plane or region or *ākāśa* used only figuratively to imply a transcendent super-empirical state of existence of the Self ? If the highest plane also is a particular region within the domain of our Space, it must form a part of the phenomenal world and be subject to dissolution, and its inmates, viz. the so-called liberated selves must be governed by the *Law of Karma* and pass through changing conditions. This would mean that no eternal peace and bliss is possible there. If it means any particular region beyond our Space, it is a conception which would involve either an obvious self-contradiction or an unwarranted limitation of the denotation of the term Space. The accepted idea of Space is that it is all-pervading,—that whatever involves the idea of motion involves the idea of Space. Any region, which is beyond this Space, but to which the Self (with or without body) can move from this Space is inconceivable. Thirdly, if the higher plane or region means merely a supra-mundane state of existence of the Self, no question of passing from one region to another can arise, except in a figurative sense. In that case, liberation would merely mean the attainment of a supreme state of eternal bliss attained by an individual self through the best form of spiritual discipline. Whether such a state is possible of attainment at all either in the embodied or in the disembodied condition of the Self, and if possible, whether its individuality is retained, where it dwells in that state, and whether it is eternal,—such questions would arise in this connection and cannot be satisfactorily answered consistently with the conception of Self of these schools.

Now, let us reflect upon the possibility of the attainment of eternal happiness. If that happiness is a product of spritual discipline, it cannot be eternal. If it is regarded as not a product of such efforts, then it is to be conceived either as eternally present in the Self or as not attainable by it at any time. In both the cases there would be no characteristic difference between the mundane state and the state of liberation of the self.

The advocates for the theory might say that during the mundane state, happiness becomes obscured by the veil of *karma* and that when *karma* is gone, there is the manifestation of infinite happiness unobscured in the self. But the assertion that *karma* has such a veiling capacity is not warranted by experience. The influence of *karma* should be reckoned as consisting in the presence of latent impressions. But we experience that though the impressions of former illusion of the snake are present in the mind, yet there is the valid cognition of the rope ; thus it is found that impression has not the capacity to obstruct. Besides, *karma* cannot cause the destruction (विपरिलोप) of the manifestation of the true nature of the self as consciousness, nor has it the capability to produce opposite or contrary behaviour in it, because the two contradictories having existence of the same order cannot remain together. Moreover, the veil is something which is directly known to us, but *karma* is a thing which is inferred to account for results of action ; so it cannot be perceived, hence it cannot be called a veil Moreover, in order to speak of *karma* as a veil, you have to admit that the individual being is its substratum, that is, you have to accept that *karma* by being related with its own substratum adds something to it. If it is supported elsewhere, it will not veil or obstruct the self. But this veil of consciousness (the self) cannot be logically demonstrated. By the veil of

consciousness is not meant the loss of it because the loss of consciousness is not accepted by the advocates of this view. Nor can the veil be asserted as the obstruction of the action of the produced knowledge because there cannot be obstruction and delay in the action of the produced knowledge which illumines objects. To explain, let us consider whether by consciousness is meant the consciousness of the nature of the self or the consciousness of the nature of valid knowledge. The first is not right because consciousness of the nature of the self is always existent. So the veil cannot mean either the prior negation or the absolute negation or the produced negation (called destruction) of consciousness. The second is not true. This valid cognition does not become produced owing to such causal defects as that of hearing and the like, so there is no occasion to assume the said veil. The operation of the eternal or produced consciousness is either to illumine the object or to impart illumination to it. It is either of the nature of consciousness particularised by the object or of the nature of manifestation. When the object is related to the eternal consciousness it will be illumined and when there is no production of things, it will not be related to the consciousness and hence there will be no illumination; so there is no occasion to imagine the veil in the case of eternal consciousness. If consciousness is a product, then it will be generated by the relation with the object, hence owing to that alone it will happen, so in that case also there is no room for the recognition of the veil.

Thus it is proved that we cannot think of anything as the veil of consciousness. So *karma* cannot be reckoned as the veil of self-consciousness. Besides, *karma* is innumerable and ever increasing; so it cannot be exhausted. Infinite *karma* cannot be reaped simultaneously. If they are reaped successively, then the flow of *karma* would not be extirpated.

Thus the hope of enjoying infinite happiness through the destruction of *karma* which veils self-consciousness is unfounded.

4 & 5 The conception of the Divine Kingdom Examined :—

It has been found that according to some religious sects liberation consists in the enjoyment of divine bliss in the eternal Kingdom of God. But what is the conception of the Kingdom of God? Here these sects are found to differ. According to some of these sects the Kingdom of God is an objectively real region existing somewhere beyond the worldly regions, where God Himself dwells with all His transcendent glories, where there is perfect happiness and no tinge of sorrow, where the individual selves, though retaining their individuality, are in constant presence of and touch with God, where the blissful character of God remains always unveiled to and is never concealed from the consciousness of the individual selves, where the selves realise that they are of God and for God and eternally related to and never separated from His perfect all-comprehensive existence. It is held that the highest goal of the spiritual self-discipline of a man is the attainment of this eternal region of perfect bliss.

Now, the advocates of this view cannot offer any positive proof of the existence of such a region. All the direct methods of valid knowledge of a man of the world are unavailing in this case. So long as a man lives and moves in this phenomenal sensuous world and is under the limitations of the psycho-physical organism, he cannot perceive this supposed spiritual region nor has he any rational ground for inferring its existence. An appeal to scriptures is futile, as it has been shown on many

previous occasions ; this is particularly so, in as much as the scriptures of different sects so widely differ in their conception of liberation as well as in other matters. Such a spiritual region must therefore be regarded merely as a product of the constructive imagination of the advocates of the view. It cannot be said that it is known through meditation and trance, because what is experienced through these is nothing but the preconceived idea of the aspirant and these experiences are found to differ fundamentally in the cases of the devotees of different sects. Further, the selves that get rid of the mundane existence and become the dwellers of this blissful spiritual region cannot be expected to come down to this world and to communicate the existence of this region to the men of the world. We cannot consistently conceive of any communication between the suffering embodied selves of this world and the blissful disembodied selves of the supposed Kingdom of God.

Even as a product of constructive imagination the conception of such a region is not self-consistent. This conception involves an idea of space. If the Kingdom of God be regarded as a region in space and God be regarded as eternally dwelling in this region, he cannot at the same time be conceived as infinite and omnipresent and the relation between Him and the world of our experience becomes an external relation. God accordingly becomes a finite God, dwelling in a particular region of the universe. Such a God must be a personal Being with a limited body, and a body which is of limited size must be subject to change and destruction and cannot be eternal and blissful and perfect.

Again, when any self emancipates itself from the bondage of the embodied mundane existence by virtue of

appropriate spiritual practices and attains this blissful Divine region, does it exist there without any body or with a particular body ? If it exists in the Divine presence with a body, it must be held that a new body is created or produced for it in this spiritual Kingdom. But as the law, viz. that whatever is produced is subject to destruction, is universally accepted, this body of the emancipated self also must be subject to destruction and it cannot possibly dwell there and enjoy bliss *eternally* in that body. Hence either newer and newer bodies have to be created for it in that region in order to enable it to enjoy the bliss of liberation, or being deprived of this body, it should be deprived of the heavenly bliss and should naturally fall down again into this world of sorrow and bondage. Moreover, whenever any body is created for a self, it is regarded as due to the self's *Karma* and as governed by the *law of Karma*. Accordingly the existence of a self in the Divine region also must be within the domain of the *law of Karma*, and so long as the domination of *Karma* continues, it is certainly not liberation in the accepted sense of the term. It cannot be said that a body capable of enjoying eternal bliss is produced in the Divine region as the result of the perfect form of spiritual activity in the mundane body, because however long-standing and glorious may be the result of any form of activity, it cannot be eternal ;—no action can produce an eternal effect. Further, subordination to *Karma* implies ignorance and the veiling of the true essential nature of the self and of God, and is therfore inconsistent with the idea of liberation. Nor can it be said that this intensive devotional exercise destroys ignorance and delivers the self from the domain of *Karma* and that God in His mercy takes it to the Divine Kingdom ; since if *Karma* and ignorance are destroyed, the possibility of its

coming into relation with another body is destroyed, and it would be arbitrary and whimsical on the part of God to endow it with a new body, even for the purpose of enabling it to enjoy unalloyed happiness.

Can it then be held that the self without any body eternally resides in the Divine Kingdom and enjoys Divine bliss? Is it reasonable to suppose that the self which is conceived as a simple spiritual atom is possessed of the capacity for enjoying the bliss in the Kingdom of God? What can be the conceivable meaning of its enjoyment? Does the enjoyment of bliss pertain to its own essential nature or is it the effect of its contact with the enjoyable objects of the Kingdom or does it arise out of its conscious relationship with God? So far as our experience goes, we find no ground for believing that it is possible for the pure noumenal self to enjoy happiness without a body and without a phenomenal consciousness or mind. Even in deep sleep and deep meditation if positive enjoyment is supposed to be really present in these states, the relation of the self with the mind and the body is not absent. Then how can we infer that the self can enjoy bliss in a state of complete cessation of relation with a phenomenal body and phenomenal consciousness? How can we even reasonably infer that the self can exist in any region in an absolutely bodiless and mindless state? Further, even if we suppose the possibility of the self's existence in a pure bodiless and mindless state, how can we conceive that this self, having been emancipated from the body and the mind in this phenomenal world, moves on to the Kingdom of God? Movement involves the idea of change of position in space; is this idea consistent with the conception of the pure bodiless self, which has got rid of all influence of *karma*? As the self has no body limited in space and as it has no

karma to move it, it cannot reasonably be conceived as moving from one position to another,—from its relation to a particular point of space in this world to another far remote particular point of space in the spiritual and blissful Kingdom of God.

Even if this supposition be allowed, what does its enjoyment consist in? If it has to enjoy the enjoyable objects there, then it must have particular organs for receiving and enjoying them. The presence of such organs of enjoyment would imply the presence of some sort of bodily organism. Moreover, the enjoyment of a plurality of objects would necessarily mean that the self's contact with those objects produces particular forms of desirable modification in it. Are such modifications in the nature of the atomic self admissible to the advocates of this doctrine? Evidently not, if of course they are reasonable men. It is to be remembered that the very existence of the noumenal self was supposed on the ground that otherwise the modification of the phenomenal consciousness could not be explained. If the self even in its pure liberated state admits of modifications or changes in its essential character, it is to be regarded as a phenomenal being and would necessitate the supposition of another changeless self behind and as the witness of this self. Further, the supposition of the existence of a plurality of enjoyable objects in the Kingdom of God would convert this Kingdom also into a phenomenal world like our own, though it might be of a superior order. The dwellers of this Kingdom also would suffer from limitations and perhaps from conflicts of interests and from hopes and disappointments. The believers in such a region and even their recognised scriptures are not unoften found to give various tempting descriptions of the materials of enjoyment

there, and every critical student would find that these are nothing but idealisations of the phenomenal objects which people impelled by desires and passions like and seek for in this world.

Others who have a more philosophical bent of mind think that the bliss enjoyed in the Divine Kingdom is not produced by contact of the self with eternal objects, but pertain to the essential nature of the self. They hold that the blissful character of self is veiled by ignorance in the state of its mundane journey, in which it identifies itself with the physical or mental body, feels limited pleasure and pain as a result of physical and mental changes and attributes to itself the bondage and limitations from which the psycho-physical organism suffers. When the self is sincerely devoted to God, restrains the activities of the mind and the body from their worldward tendencies and engages them in the loving service of God, undergoes suitable spiritual discipline and surrenders itself wholly to the Divine love and mercy, then the unique power of the love and mercy of God descends upon it, destroys its ignorance, emancipates it from the physical and mental limitations, frees it from the domain of *karma* and unveils the infinite bliss which is inherent in its essential nature. Thenceforward the self goes on eternally enjoying the infinite bliss of its own character in the spiritual Kingdom of God.

Now the question is, can this doctrine be consistently maintained? If the very nature of the self be essentially blissful, how could it ever have been veiled by ignorance and subjected to the miseries of births after births in this world? How could the self ever be ignorant of its own essential nature? If the so-called self-ignorance be supposed

to pertain to its nature from eternity, this also must be regarded as essential to its nature and must be supposed to pertain to it throughout eternity, and then what is called liberation would be impossible. If this ignorance be not essentially and eternally present in its nature, there must be some cause for its production and association with its nature. As the self cannot be conceived to have any *karma* previous to ignorance, *karma* cannot be its cause. If the Divine Will be the cause of this self-ignorance of the self, God must be held responsible for all its bondage and sufferings and He cannot then be regarded as loving and merciful and worshipped as such. It cannot be said that the devotion and reverence and spiritual discipline on the part of the self are the causes of the feeling of love and mercy in the character of God. No such causal relation can be rationally established. If any such relation could be established, the Divine nature would have to be supposed as modified and changed by the *karma* of the individual selves. Further, it would lead to the absurd supposition that the Divine nature is essentially cruel, being the original cause of the ignorances and sufferings of the countless individual selves, and that the devotion of any single self is powerful enough to change this nature and to produce infinite love and mercy in it, so that the power of the cruelty of God's original character is subdued and frustrated by the power of the love and mercy produced in it by the action of the self. Moreover, there is no rational explanation as to how in course of its mundane journey the self-ignorant self can at any stage become devoted to God, how its original worldward tendencies can have a sudden check and turn towards God or its own unknown essential nature. Thus the self's ignorance of its own essential nature, its yearning for emancipation from this ignorance, its attitude of devotion and love to God, God's love and mercy to the self, etc.

which are supposed in this doctrine of liberation, are all incapable of being rationally established. Hence this conception of liberation also is not rationally acceptable.

Moreover, the idea of the enjoyment of its own nature by the self involves a distinction of subject and object, enjoyer and enjoyable, within the essential nature of the self. This would mean a complexity in the nature of the self and would make it a phenomenal reality, subject to change within itself. This would also affect the eternity of the supposed liberation.

Can then the enjoyment of bliss by the liberated self be regarded as the effect of its conscious relationship with the eternally blissful character of God? It is said that each self is essentially a part or a spark or an individualised self-manifestation of God, and as such it is essentially non-different from Him. This eternal and essential relationship of identity-in-difference with God is from eternity forgotten by the self through ignorance, and hence the self identifies itself with the phenomenal psycho-phosical organism in which it is embodied for the time being and becomes subject to all sorts of limitations and sufferings. When through the culture of devotion and love to God, it realises its inherent relationship with God, it becomes liberated from its worldly limitations and sufferings, consciously participates in the blissful nature of God and eternally enjoys this bliss in the Kingdom of God. Now, this conception of liberation also suffers from all those rational difficulties which have been mentioned in the foregoing discussion. How can the self possibly forget its eternal and essential relationship with God? How can this ignorance arise in the essentially God-conscious nature of the self-manifestation of God? How consistently with the

conception of the perfect and blissful and loving nature of God, as cherished by the devotees, can the Divine Will be regarded as the creator of this ignorance, which is the source of all the sufferings of the selves ? How, if the ignorance be regarded as causeless and eternal, can any self shake it off from its nature and realise its essential identity with God and attain eternal liberation ? All such questions are unanswerable. Moreover, how can there be the relation of part and whole between the self and God, such a relation being experienced only in cases of material bodies—bodies with extension and measurement ? How can the analogy of sparks and fire be applicable in this case ? Even if this be admitted, how can any part enjoy what pertains to the nature of the whole ? The attribute of quenching thirst or producing a cooling effect may pertain to a volume of water; does it imply that every molecule of water has got such an attribute ?*

* According to the above-mentioned view the relation between God and selves is recognised as both difference and non-difference. Now, we are here to examine whether according to the theory of difference as well as non-difference there can be any desire to know God or any intuition of God. God is omniscient, hence the individual self which is non-different from it, ought also to be regarded as all-knowing; therefore there cannot be the sense of difference corroborated by the knowledge that God is known in some aspect and not known in another. We desire to know the thing which is generally known and particularly unknown or whose existence is known, but whose special characteristics are unknown If it were not the case, then owing to the absence of reason (हेतु) and utility (प्रयोजन), there could not be the desire for knowledge. Thus the desire to know God is not possible God being eternally pure, the individuals non-different from Him are also to be conceived as eternally pure and liberated, and therefore there cannot be any desire for liberation If on the other hand the impurity and bondage of individual selves be recognised, then God also, which is non-different from them, must be regarded as impure and having bondage ; in that

Again, it may be asked, what is the meaning in saying that the nature of God is blissful ? Does He enjoy bliss or is He the most perfect object of enjoyment or is He

case God would not be able even to save Himself. How then can the individuals be actuated by any desire to know God and thereby to liberate themselves from bondage ?

Now about the intuition of such a God. Here the question is : what does this intuition objectify, does it objectify God different as well as non-different from the individual self or non-different from it ? The first cannot be, because according to the theory of difference as well as non-difference, difference being not contradictory to non-difference, the difference seated in the self cannot be eliminated by intuition having difference as well as non-difference for its object. A contradictory intuition alone can remove the object of a previous intuition The absolute non-difference of God and the individual self cannot also be the object of the said intuition, because before the elimination of their difference as well as non-difference, non-difference as detached from difference being non-existent, cannot be perceived.

Advocate—The portion of difference is eliminated by the said intuition, which has for its object mere non-difference which is present during the time of the presence of difference as well as non-difference. Hence the absolute non-difference can be intuited.

Refutation—This is not proper, because this non-difference being non-contradictory to difference, cannot expel the difference. It is observed that the knowledge of generality does not eliminate the knowledge of the individuals. So the knowledge having for its object non-difference which is non-contradictory to difference cannot expel the latter. According to the view of the advocate the difference as well as non-difference is admitted in the case of the relation of the genus and the species ; hence in case the knowledge of non-difference can reject difference, there will be the elimination of different individuals due to the knowledge of generality which is non-different from them. Moreover, absolute non-difference means the destruction of the factor of difference, and this is not possible because it will involve the destruction of the self. If the substratum remains, then the difference which is of the nature of this substratum or which is the characteristic attribute of an equal essence of the substratum does not become destroyed.

Himself Bliss ? If He is an enjoyer of bliss, He must have objects of enjoyment. What can be His objects of enjoyment in His spiritual Kingdom ? Is there a plurality of enjoyable objects in that Kingdom ? Has He different organs to enjoy them? In that case God would be a phenomenal personality with a phenomenal body in a phenomenal world with diversities of objects. Such a God and such a world would require for their explanation a superior noumenal God in the same way as the conscious beings and the world of their experience are supposed to require the belief in God for their explanation. God as the self-luminous spirit cannot evidently be an object of enjoyment to any other subject. If He be pure Bliss, He would be a mere abstract quality and not a Person. If blissfulness merely implies that God has no imperfection and no want and desire, it is a pure negative conception. In that case the realisation of unity with Him would imply no enjoyment, but only a sorrowless state.

Thus we find that we cannot, even by a stretch of our constructive imagination, form a rationally consistent conception of liberation in the sense of the attainment of perfect bliss in the Kingdom of God. Those who advocate this view of liberation are found to differ further with regard to the time and the manner in which this region is attained by the self. There are some sects which hold that an individual self, having been blessed with the true knowledge of and perfect love for God and having been released from all bondage of worldly desire and impurity, passes to the blissful Kingdom of God immediately after physical death. There are other sects which believe that all individual selves, whether virtuous or vicious, whether devoted to God or attached to worldly objects, have to wait after death in some intermediate region like undertrial

prisoners till the final Day of judgment which will perhaps come after the dissolution of this world of living beings, and on that indefinite future date God will pass judgment upon them in accordance with the merits acquired by them within the small period of their worldly life and allow those who had led a pious life of devotion to Him in that life to enter into His own blissful Kingdom and condemn others to eternal sufferings in hell. Others again imagine that there is a hierarchy of worlds above worlds, the Kingdom of God being the highest of all, and that every individual self has to pass through all these higher and higher regions in order to be entitled to enter into the highest Divine Kingdom. According to some, the individual selves pass through an indefinite number of births in the human region in this phenomenal world and thus obtain an indefinite number of opportunities to purify themselves and to attain worthiness for entrance into the Divine Kingdom. According to others again, only one human birth is allowed to each self, and upon the use or abuse of this single opportunity, its entire eternal future destiny depends. The advocates of these conflicting views quarrel among themselves as to which of them is the right view, and each school tries to establish its own cherished idea and refute the rival conceptions, generally by an appeal to scripture and imagination. Some of these views are so puerile as not to demand any serious examination. The others also are based more on conjecture than on any rational ground. Since the very fundamental conception of liberation, of which these are elaborations, is found to be incapable of being rationally established, it is needless to subject these imaginary details to critical examination

With regard to the doctrine under review, we may refer to one point more. Among the exponents of this

doctrine there are many thinkers who are conscious of the unwarrantableness and illogicality of conceiving liberation as the eternal enjoyment of bliss in any particular spatial region, called the Kingdom of God. They try to avoid the difficulties by explaining that the term kingdom or region is used figuratively. According to them the Kingdom of God is not a particular spatial region. God is Himself His own kingdom. He is above space and time, which belong to the phenomenal world. God does not exist in space. He exists in Himself, by Himself and for Himself. His power is unique and inscrutable, and it is through the exercise of this power that He eternally manifests Himself in the forms of countless individual finite selves and diverse material objects without any transformation of His essential transcendent character. All these manifestations also exist in Him, by Him and for Him. The selves in their mundane states are ignorant of their divine spiritual character; they are forgetful of their being spiritual manifestations of God; they are unaware that they are really living and moving and having their existence in God, by God and for God; they do not realise that neither they nor the objects of their experience have any existence apart from and independent of the existence of God. They falsely identify themselves with the gross and subtle material bodies limited in time and space, which are associated with them in their mundane journey and regard their modifications and limitations and sufferings as their own. But the selves are endowed with the internal capacity and potentiality to rise above this ignorance and illusion and to realise themselves as the conscious and spiritual self-manifestations of God and as living and moving in and for God. This capacity is developed and this potentiality is actualised by the practice of love and

devotion to God. When any individual self attains this spiritual experience of its essential relationship with God, it no longer identifies itself with the finite mind and body, and no longer suffers from the bondage and limitation pertaining to its embodied existence. It becomes consciously united with God. It finds God as its source and Ruler. It experiences itself and the world in God and God in itself and the world. Its entire consciousness becomes perfect and full of God and hence full of bliss. This highest plane of blissful spiritual experience is called the Kingdom of God. The self then eternally dwells in this plane of experience, in which nothing other than God is experienced The self then experiences itself as non-different from God, though as a special manifestation and centre of experience it retains its distinct individuality. Liberation accordingly consists in the eternal residence of the self in this perfect spiritual plane of consciousness. Being liberated from the plane of world-experience, the self dwells eternally in the plane of God-experience.

Now, though this interpretation of the Kingdom of God removes the difficulties arising from the idea of space involved in it, it is based upon the particular metaphysical conceptions of God and the selves and the ultimate relation between them, and these conceptions, as shown before, could not be rationally established. Further, it cannot answer satisfactorily the questions raised in the previous paragraphs. It cannot account for the ignorance and bondage and sufferings of the selves consistently with the cherished conception of God and the essential purity and spirituality of the selves. Whether the selves are conceived as eternal manifestations of God or His manifestations in time, neither of these conceptions can be maintained consistently with the supposed Divine nature. Moreover,

if the selves are essentially divine, their worldliness cannot be accounted for, and if their worldliness is without beginning or is the work of the Divine will and power, the possibility of their liberation cannot be rationally established. Again, the relation between God and the selves also, as pointed out before, cannot be rationally conceived. Thus various difficulties stand in the way of the acceptance of this view of liberation.

6. The Conception of Self's liberation from sorrow by becoming unconscious Criticised.

According to the advocate's view, in the state of liberation, the all-pervading self (hence it cannot go to another higher region) gets rid of all its attributes, destiny is destroyed and sorrowlessness is attained.

Now, this doctrine also suffers from various difficulties. First, if the attributes are inherent in the self, it is unintelligible how its relation with them can completely cease and it can exist without them. In our discussion on the nature of the self, we have found that this conception of the selves being innumerable infinite all-pervading entities possessed of the attributes of knowledge, desire, etc. is incapable of being rationally maintained. We need not repeat the arguments here. But supposing that these attributes are eternally inherent in the nature of the selves, how can they get rid of them and thereby attain liberation? If the presence of these attributes implies the possibility of sorrows, how can they pass beyond this possibility? Since, according to this view, the self is really of the nature of a doer and enjoyer etc., since the very existence of the self, as distinguished from the body, the senses and the mind, is inferred on the

ground of the experience of these attributes, it does not logically stand that it can at any state get rid of all these attributes. Like the warmth of the sun, the nature of a thing cannot be absent from it. Hence the cessation of all attributes would involve the annihilation of the substratum i. e. the self itself. But this kind of reward cannot certainly be the object of spiritual ambition ; the self cannot seek for its own annihilation, and the exponents of this doctrine also are vehemently opposed to the idea of *Nirvāṇa* examined before. It cannot be said that the self remains by being qualified by the cessation of all its specific qualities. What is the meaning of the quality of the cessation of all qualities ? Is the absence of all qualities itself a positive attribute ? This would involve an obvious self-contradiction. If it means that the self exists eternally without any attributes, then the nature of the self must essentially be conceived as attributeless and changeless, without any consciousness and desire and activity. This is however inconsistent with the view accepted by the exponents of this doctrine. Moreover, we ask, is the self essentially conscious or unconscious, self-luminous or non-self-luminous ? If it is essentially unconscious or non-self-luminous, how can it possess the attributes of knowledge, desire, etc. and be an actual knower, desirer or actor, even through contact with or the instrumentality of the mind and senses, which are not themselves conscious entities ? How can then it be in any way different from a material body ? If it is essentially conscious or self-luminous, how can it be deprived of consciousness or self-luminosity, when it is in itself in liberation ? Nor can it be said that though essentially conscious, it does not remain conscious of anything on account of the absence of its connection with any mind

which is the instrument of its knowledge, because each self being regarded as essentially infinite its absence of connection with any mind cannot be established. Having got rid of its limitations and bondage, it should rather be in contact with all minds and all bodies and should have the full play of its attributes.

Moreover, how can it ever get rid of the destiny or *Karma* which pertains to it from the beginning of its mundane journey ? Its connection with the body and the mind being due to destiny, all its thoughts, actions etc. must be influenced by that destiny, and no thought or action, no form of spiritual doctrine, no right knowledge, can be expected to kill that destiny and make it absolutely free from all future possibilities of contact with mind and body. Hence the possibility of liberation is not established.

Moreover, the absence of sorrow in that state cannot be known, because consciousness or knowledge, which also is regarded as an attribute of the self, is supposed to be eleminated or destroyed in the state of liberation. If the self exists in the unconscious state in liberation, it would hardly be different from a state like that of swoon or a piece of stone or dry wood. Hence in that state owing to the absence of consciousness, the cessation of sorrow will not be experienced; so such freedom from sorrow cannot be the *summum bonum* of life. If it be said that though not felt it will be the object of desire because of its causing cessation of sorrows, then our contention is that on account of its not being the content of valid knowledge, such a state of cessation of sorrow will not be established. And even if it be regarded as existent, its existence would be of the nature of the existence of *negation* (*abhāva*), because of its absolute non-perception.

Besides, the existent can never be reduced into the non-existent. Hence there cannot be the cessation of sorrow in the shape of its absolute negation. Moreover, sorrowlessness of the self means either the acquisition of some additional desirable quality or merely getting rid of some undesirable quality. Both of these must involve non-eternity and destructibility, because all results of actions, such as, production, attainment, change and purification — must invariably be perishable, so there cannot possibly be the attainment of eternal sorrowlessness. Moreover, if sorrow is related to the self and afterwards destroyed, then the self will get tranformed. It has been proved already that there is no such category as the relation of *Inherence.* As the relation of *Identity* between self and sorrow should be accepted, there ought to be the destruction of self along with the destruction of sorrow. At the destruction of self who will get liberation ? Besides, the absolute negation of sorrow cannot be liberation which we want to achieve, because the negation (अत्यन्ताभाव) is taken by the advocates as eternal and hence it cannot be a thing to be accomplished. Moreover, there can be no relation between self and the negation of sorrow. It cannot be asserted that there is the relation of *svarūpa* between them because in that case too it cannot be capable of being accomplished. To explain, when the self is said to be related to the negation of sorrow, the relation is not anything different from the self. The nature (*svarūpa*) of the self itself constitutes its relation to the negation. That is, sorrowlessness is not anything different from the self but is one with the self itself. But the self is always there and so sorrowlessness which is one with it is already accomplished and cannot therefore be an object of desire to be attained. It has already been proved that there can be no such relation as *svarūpa* relation. Besides, where there

is absolute negation (अत्यन्ताभाव) there cannot arise the notion of destruction (ध्वंस). When there is absolute negation of sorrow in the self, we can never think that sorrow is destroyed there. Thus we find that liberation cannot consist in the destruction of sorrow.

Some again hold that the self, having got rid of the attributes which are manifested through its connection with the mind and body and having transcended the domain of phenomenal knowledge, is liberated from all possible sorrows and enjoys eternal bliss. This view also cannot be rationally sustained. How can it possibly enjoy bliss, when it is in itself, when it has neither any organ of enjoyment nor any object of enjoyment? If it be said that being essentially infinite and being emancipated from the worldly limitations, the self in the liberated state is in contact with all minds and can therefore enjoy all the happinesses in the universe, it can be said in reply that for the same reason the so-called liberated self should suffer all the sorrows of the universe It is meaningless to say that the self having attained freedom from all the causes of sorrow must be blissful, when there is no possibility of the positive experience and enjoyment of bliss.

7. Criticism of the conception of liberation as the self's existence in itself in joyless and sorrowless state in isolation from cosmic Energy (*Prakrti*).

According to another theory, the selves, which are innumerable, are essentially of the nature of pure transcendent unrelated attributeless changeless consciousness, and consequently they are by themselves, neither doers nor enjoyers nor sufferers nor even knowers of anything; it

is individual Intelligence (which is the first evolute of *Prakrti* or Primordial Energy) that being illumined by the mere presence of an individual self becomes the doer and enjoyer and knower of the diverse transformations of Energy constituting the world. It is only through indiscrimination between the self and *Prakrti* or the self and Intelligence,·that the self appears to be under bondage, subject to limitations and suffering miseries. Hence as soon as the knowledge is attained that the self is distinct from *Prakrti* and all its transformations and as such is free from all limitations and changes and sufferings, liberation is obtained. *Sādhanā*, therefore, consists chiefly in the systematic discipline for the acquisition of this knowledge, and the highest goal is the self's existence in its essential nature unconnected with *Prakrti*

Now as the distinction between the doer and the self is maintained in this view, the self must be regarded as in its essential nature eternally untouched by joy and sorrow, and therefore it cannot be said to have either any real bondage or any real liberation. Hence according to this view, it should be asserted that its apparent bondage and liberation are due respectively to its connection with and separation from *Prakrti* or Intelligence. But as *Prakrti* and its transformation into intelligence are regarded as beginningless, their connection with the self, in relation to which alone they can be manifested and transformed must also be eternal, and the self's mundane existence will also be eternal ; so there can be no liberation. In case Intelligence is conceived as non-eternal, it must have origination. The positive thing which is non-produced can never be destroyed. Thus at the time when Intelligence was not produced, there was no mundane existence of the self. That is, before the production of Intelligence it was in a state of perfect

liberation and no *adrsta* (moral consequence) could remain in it. Hence the production of Intelligence in relation to the self and the destruction of the state of liberation of the self become unaccountable. If however this is assumed, then the state of liberation which is hoped to be attained through *Sādhanā* will also be transitory and will be lost through connection with fresh Intelligence.

According to these advocates, the self is unconcerned, undifferentiated and pure ; so it should have no experience of happiness and sorrow. In order to pass through such experiences, it will have to be active. In that case it will suffer modification and owing to this it will no longer be the self as conceived by them. Hence it will have to be admitted that bondage belongs to intelligence. Therefore bondage and freedom would belong to different beings, the first to intelligence and the second to the self. To explain, the causes of bondage, namely ignorance, attachment etc. are seated in intelligence, an effect of unconscious Energy and not in the self, but it is maintained that this ignorance of intelligence causes bondage to the self and the removal of ignorance is its liberation. Hence, this conception of bondage and liberation is illogical.

It may be argued that the bondage and the liberation are ascribed to the self only in a secondary sense, just as redness of the flower or the victory of soldiers are attributed respectively to the crystal and the king. But this cannot avoid the logical difficulties stated above. If intelligence is eternal, the self will never be liberated and if it is non-eternal, either the liberated self would be liable to come under bondage again or the production of intelligence and the mundane existence of the self would be impossible. Moreover, the said ascription is not possible. Where there

is a striking point of similarity or relationship between two entities, there alone, the aforesaid secondary application of a word is usually made. For example, the word 'lion' is applied in the case of a person having the attributes of courage etc. But there is no such relation between intelligence and the self which are dissimilar in all respects. Hence the secondary application of the terms bondage and liberation is not possible in this case.

The relationship between the self and the intelligence is sought to be established by asserting that the self being the lord of intelligence and intelligence being lord's own, there is the possessor-possessed-relation between the two. But since the self is regarded as essentially unrelated and indifferent, there can be no such real relation as the owner and the owned, the ruler and the ruled, between the self and the intelligence, and hence the analogy is beside the point. Nor can the attribute of being possessed belong to the intelligence, because according to the advocate intelligence is not capable of performing any service to the naturally pure self. Because the self is believed to be unqualified and unmodifiable and incapable of development and degradation, it cannot be an object of service to intelligence. It may be held that though the self cannot accept any real service in the ordinary sense, its simply witnessing the works of intelligence may be regarded as the acceptance of service; to this our objection is that as the self's witnessing the operations of intelligence is eternal, and as the self's actual occasional acts of witnessing and the modifications of consciousness arising out of them are not admitted, there cannot be the question of service to the self in any sense whatsoever. Besides, being absolutely indifferent, its witnessing also is not possible. Thus no

kind of service rendered by *Prakrti* and intelligence and no kind of real condition can be ascertained. Hence the alleged possessor-possessed-relation cannot be logically justified. Moreover, it may be asked, whether the supposed relation is different from *Prakrti* and the self or non-different from them ? It cannot be said to be different because the advocate of this view does not accept any entity distinct from Energy and the self. If the said relation is non-different, then owing to the non-elimination of Energy and the self, the possessor-possessed-relation will not be eliminated ; so liberation will not be possible. These arguments will apply to other relations also. If the relation of the seer and the seen is admitted to be of the nature of capability, that is, if the capability of seeing or witnessing belongs to the self and the capability of being seen or witnessed belongs to unconscious intelligence, then in liberation also there will be the persistence of the world, because the capability of the seer and the seen cannot cease. And as it remains, there will be no liberation. It is asserted that the said capability is operative in the mundane state only, but not in liberation. But there is nothing, called capability, separated from the nature of Energy. If in the state of liberation of any self, the Energy be deprived of its natural capacity, then owing to the oneness of Energy, not a bit of its capability will be there and in this way through the liberation of one self, all selves would be liberated. It is argued that because the selves are many, the capability seated in Energy may be lost with reference to one, and may not be lost with reference to others. But this argument is futile. Because all selves are essentially of the same character viz. pure changeless consciousness, and because Energy is essentially one, there is no ground why capability with regard to one self should be different from that with

regard to another. Here no explanation can be offered how the relation of Energy with one self can cease while its relation with others continues. Moreover, Energy being unconscious, it cannot attribute its characteristics to the self. Further, *Prakṛti*, which is not aware of the division between bondage and liberation, cannot be active in order to achieve the liberation of the self. Besides, since every self is regarded as absolutely inactive and since the operation of Energy in its presence is regarded as the sole cause of the self's apparent bondage, it is inconceivable how the operation of Energy can again be the cause of its liberation or how the unconscious Energy can change the mode of its operation i. e. its nature itself with respect to any individual self so as to contribute to its liberation. Again, since *Prakrti* can operate only in the presence of the selves, every form of its operation should involve its relation to them, and how can any of its operations destroy its relation to any of the selves ? So according to this interpretation of the relation between the selves and Energy there can be no liberation.

Energy is said to cease to bind the person who has known the truth that the self is essentially distinct from itself. But this also is a groundless assertion. How can the conjunction between Energy and the self be destroyed by this knowledge ? Since Energy and the self are both regarded as real and eternal entities and since there is no spatial or temporal gap between them, they must be eternally conjoined to each other ; and as this conjunction is regarded as the cause of bondage, how can there be liberation at all. Again, what is meant by the person knowing the truth ? The self can not know the truth, since that would imply activity and change on its part. Energy also cannot, since it is unconscious. If intelligence knows it, this would imply that knowledge is dependent

upon and remains with conjunction. Hence so long as knowledge is present, liberation is not, and the knowledge is absent, indiscrimination is present. In both cases liberation is impossible.

It is argued that a dancing girl by art produces curiosity and desire for enjoyment in some, but she fails to attract those who have the discriminating knowledge, namely that this is merely artfulness; smilary, Energy by being active produces someone's curiosity with regard to sound, touch and the like, but awaken discrimination in those who are not affected at all. But the illustration is inapt. By the sight of an artistic activity of the dancing girl, some get excited, while others do not. This absence of excitement in some cases is not due to any special activity of the dancing girl in relation to them, but it is due to discriminating knowledge and self-control on their part. So here the curiosity and its absence have different causes. But in the case under discussion, the changes of one Energy are regarded as the causes of both, the self being supposed to be wholly inactive; hence is the irrelevancy of the illustration. Moreover, the self being admitted to be of uniform nature, nothing can be added to it; hence it cannot have connection with any characteristic difference arising out of its witnessing Energy. Really speaking, no one among the audience has any excitement due to the mere presence of the dancing girl. The peculiar feelings are aroused in them owing to the differences in their characters, pure or impure. If this were not the case, then the peculiarity due to mere presence of the dancing girl would appear even in those who are innocent of the peculiar sentiments. But the advocates of the theory regard all selves as of uniform nature, so no cause can be found for the selves' being differently affected by the transformations of the Energy. Hence the illustration is inappropriate.

Moreover, according to the advocate there is the relation of conjunction between the self and Energy. But their conjunction cannot be determined. The conjunction of partless Energy and the self is not possible. Even if such a conjunction is possible, then as it is beginningless and positive, it will never disappear, so there will be no final emancipation or liberation from worldly existence. If the conjunction is acknowledged as having a beginning, then the question is, is it due to the self or to Energy ? Both these alternatives are unsound, because the Energy and the self are taken as pervading and motionless. And the relation of identity between the self and the Energy i. e. consciousness and unconsciousness, is not possible. If such a possibility is granted, then there will be no liberation. There cannot be even a witness-witnessed-relation between the self and the Energy consistently with this theory. The recognition of such a relation fails to account for the appearance of consciousness in Energy and that of activity in the self. The potter does not receive the character of an actor on account of mere sight and by being the object of sight the pillar does not get the characteristic of one having consciousness. Hence the recognition of relation between Energy and the self is not proper. Because the capacity of being the seen and the seer seated in Energy and the self is eternal, the self, the seer of eternally transforming Energy will have eternal bondage, so the hope of aloofness from Energy cannot be fulfilled.

8. The Conception of liberation as the manifestation of eternal happiness in the self Examined.

According to some, liberation consists in the manifestation of eternal happiness in the self. This doctrine

also cannot be substantiated. If happiness and its manifestation in the self were eternal and constituted the true character of the self, then there would be the absence of its mundane existence, and in that case liberation from bondage would have no significance with respect to the self. If it be said that though happiness is eternally present in the nature of the self, it is not eternally manifested in its consciousness and its manifestation is produced through spiritual discipline at the time of liberation, then this would mean that the enjoyment of the happiness of its nature is dependent upon its connection with the mind and some sorts of modification of the mind. That is to say, the liberation would imply the self's relatedness to the mind, which is also the cause of its bondage. Further, all produced things being perishable, the manifestation of happiness in the self would have an end and the liberated self would again be subject to sorrow and bondage. A produced thing of a positive nature must invariably be destroyed, so at the destruction of one manifestation of that happiness, there will be the loss of liberation.

An eternal series of successive manifestations of happiness in the liberated self is not conceivable, because when one such manifestation comes to its end, there is no cause for the production of another manifestation. The manifestation of happiness being supposed to be dependent upon phenomenal cognition or realisation of the innate happiness of the self and this again being the product of spiritual practice, when the body and the mind are absent in the state of liberation, such practice and the consequent cognition or realisation would be impossible and therefore such fresh manifestation of happiness also would be impossible. Hence when one manifestation of happiness dies out, happiness of the self's nature becomes unmanifested and

it would be liable to fresh sorrow and bondage. It is futile to assert that as happiness belongs to the nature of the self, it being once manifested continues in the manifest state for ever; on the contrary as the manifestation of happiness does not belong to the essential nature of the self and it requires the co-operation of phenomenal consciousness in the embodied state for this manifestation, when the embodied state and the phenomenal consciousness are gone, the manifested state of happiness appears to be impossible.

Again, is that eternal happiness different from the self or non-different from it ? If it is taken as different, then again the question is :—is that produced or non-produced ? If it is produced, then it will necessarily be perishable. The destruction of the positive effect is inevitable. Hence it cannot be *summum bonum*, because in that case due to the perishable character of such happiness, the liberated self will again be in bondage. If it is taken as non-produced, then its illumination cannot be explained. Happiness cannot be self-luminous and the exponent also does not recognise its self-luminousity. In the state of liberation, the instruments of knowledge, namely conjunction with mind and the like cannot remain; hence the said non-produced happiness will remain unknown, and therefore it cannot be the *summum bonum*. The happiness which is not felt can never be the object of desire. And if it is admitted that sense-organs etc., exist at the time of liberation, then there will be no difference of liberation from mundane existence. The other alternative, namely that happiness is non-different from the self, is also not acceptable. The nature of the self being always unveiled, the happiness, if non-different from it, should be experienced in the state of mundane existence as well. But this is contrary to experience. If

in the state of liberation, there is the production of an excess in the self, then because of that excess being of the nature of the self, the self also will be non-different from it, hence there will be non-eternity of the self. That which has excess cannot but be non-eternal.

Besides, there cannot be liberation in the form of intuitive perception of eternal happiness, because at the time of liberation, owing to the absence of the body, such perception cannot be possible. If for the sake of enjoyment of happiness, the relation of the self with the body is admitted, then due to that, sorrow cannot be escaped. Moreover, the liberated self cannot have the body, because virtue and vice which are believed to have given rise to the body are not at that time there. If it is said that by the destiny produced from knowledge of Reality, the body is also produced, then because of the impossibility of the eternity of the body, it will be negated, and owing to its negation, liberation also will be negated. Moreover, the exponent of the theory accepts the identity of the cause and the effect. Hence in order to eliminate effects like sorrow etc., the destruction of the self also is required, because the elimination of the effect is experienced as due to the elimination of their material cause. So at the time of liberation, there must be the annihilation of the self and such a reward can not be the object of desire.

Moreover, the question is: does liberation, i. e. the manifestation of eternal bliss, exist already or not? If it does not, then owing to its being an effect, it will be non-eternal and at the time of liberation, due to the absence of the body etc., there can not be the production of such manifestation, hence the non-eternity of liberation would happen. If it exists already, then that should exist unveiled

even at present, so it would not be unmanifested. Moreover, there cannot be a real veil of bliss in the self whose essence consists in being blissful. It is not possible for the self-same bliss to be illumined and non-illumined simultaneously. If it be said that at present bliss is manifested as contracted, but at the time of liberation it is expanded ; to this our contention is that there cannot be real contraction of partless bliss. Moreover, the elimination of subtle body is not sound, because merely that is not desired by anyone.

Moreover, the advocates of the view under discussion acknowledge the manifestation of eternal joy and also admit that its eternity is modified. Now the question is, whether liberation is the manifestation of eternal joy or is it the eternal manifestation of joy ? It may also be asked whether the alleged manifestation is origination or knowledge. Of these there cannot be the manifestation of eternal joy. Manifestation is origination ; what is eternal cannot be originated. It is contradictory for an eternal thing of a positive nature to become originated. It is not sound to assert that the modification through sustenance of the eternal nature is the said origination, because it is not possible for a thing to suffer modification and at the same time to preserve its eternity. Such a recognition is apparently contradictory, because in that case even in the mundane state that modification would take place. Moreover, if the knowledge of eternal joy is eternal, then even at the mundane state, it would be there. It cannot be said that it is non-eternal, because at the time of liberation instruments of cognition are absent. If it be objected that a thing can be originated and at the same time be eternal as is the case with flow, then our answer will be that there is nothing called flow separate from those which flow. Moreover, at the time of liberation there is no organ of

instrument, so the flow of the origination of joy is impossible*

* According to the protagonists of the view we are considering, the liberation, the manifestation of eternal bliss is achieved through a blend of knowledge of reality and performance of Vedic Karma. But a combination of both of these two is inefficacious for the purpose of liberation. If the manifestation of eternal bliss is eternal, then it cannot be brought about, and if non-eternal, then because of the absence of the body etc. which are causes of it, it cannot be produced at the time of liberation. So the knowledge of reality is of no avail for the sake of liberation.

The performance of prescribed *Karma* is also of no avail here. With regard to liberation the *Karma* have no usefulness, because liberation is of the nature of manifestation of eternal and unexcelled bliss. The nature of bliss being eternal, *Karma* cannot bring it into existence. Moreover the question is, is the alleged manifestation of bliss to be regarded as positive knowledge, or as the removal of a veil. If the first alternative is accepted, then this bliss being eternal *Sādhanā* is not required for it. If that is produced, then it will be perishable and so liberation which is of that nature will also be perishable. As produced knowledge is dependent on the body, sense-organs etc., liberation in that case will not be different from mundane existence. Now about the second alternative. The alleged veil must either be illumined by the bliss itself or by the individual self. These two alternatives are wrong. If that bliss is unconscious (जड), then owing to the absence of that which will imagine the veil there, it will not be illumined. If that bliss is self-luminous consciousness, then because of its b ing indifferent (तटस्थ), the veil cannot be illumined by it to the individual living being. It cannot be said that it is the attribute of the individual living being, because the attribute and the substratum cannot be altogether different. The question of *inherence* of these two cannot arise because *inherence* has already been refuted. It cannot be said that the said bliss has the relation of identity with the individual self. It has already been shown that the identity of the nature of real difference and non-difference is not possible. Hence, the advocate of this doctrine cannot explain the nature of the veil, and consequently the efficacy of Vedic *Karma* to remove the veil cannot reasonably be held. Thus the hope that his *Sādhanā* will result in the realisation of eternal bliss is all vain.

9. The Conception of Jīva's unity with attributeless Brahman through the elimination of cosmic Ignorance Examined.

The protagonists of the view recognise two kinds of liberation—liberation while living (जीवन्मुक्ति) and liberation after death (विदेहमुक्ति). The former liberation is attained, the adherents hold, at the elimination of root-ignorance by direct knowledge gained through hearing (श्रवण), thinking (मनन) and meditating (निदिध्यासन).

I.

The advocates are of opinion that at the hearing of the words "Thou art That" (Thou art not the limited embodied being, but thou art the infinite Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) there arises in the aspirant's mind the indeterminate knowledge which drives out root-ignorance with reference to the indeterminate object, namely attributeless Reality. But this conclusion cannot be rationally substantiated. There is no proof in favour of the contention that mind has indeterminate modification. After the contact of the object with eye we do not experience that there is any delay in the production of determinate knowledge which may be said to be due to the delay caused by indeterminate knowledge. Even granting such knowledge we submit that indeterminate knowledge cannot contradict anything; we experience that determinate knowledge alone removes ignorance; that is, the knowledge having mode (सप्रकार) is invariably the contradictory to ignorance, so how can the knowledge which is without any mode be contradictory to the ignorance of Brahman? Besides, in the case of apparent and phenomenal objects which are inexplicable, the contradiction between ignorance

about limited objects and the knowledge about them is experienced; and to this rule, there is no exception. So this property of veiling the limited consciousness which is experienced in all cases without exception should not be left out of account. But the recognition of the destruction of the root-ignorance by knowledge vitiates this rule. That is, though that ignorance is not about particularised consciousness, its destruction by knowledge is wrongly inferred and thus it is against the law of inference. Moreover, according to the advocate, the indeterminate knowledge that precedes determinate knowledge refers to empirically false objects. So from this example it is to be inferred that the indeterminate knowledge even when it refers to non-dual Reality must refer to an object which is false. Besides, the indeterminate knowledge about Brahman cannot be contradictory to the knowledge about the world because it does not objectify the absence of the world since the knowledge of absence is always determinate.

Moreover, advocate's contention viz. the meaning of certain words ('Thou', 'That') secondarily applied has a direct reference to Reality, is opposed to the rule operative in every case of verbal knowledge. (1) Everywhere an indirect application (लक्षणा) or secondary significance of a word has power to produce knowledge of a thing having properties; but the Pure Reality has no property or attribute to characterise it. (Hence लक्ष्यतावच्छेदकानवगाहिलक्षणाग्रहः). (2) The power of words which is efficacious in producing the knowledge of things qualified will produce knowledge about something which is without qualification (लक्षणाग्रहस्यनिर्विकल्पकोपस्थितिकारणत्वम्). But this is contrary to experience, because the knowledge due to the power of words refers to that thing alone which is capable of being known through that power. (3) By the words 'Thou' 'That' a qualified thing

is known, but the advocate believes that the words produce knowledge of the thing without qualification (शक्तिग्रहस्य विशिष्टार्थविषयकस्य शक्यसंबन्ध्युपस्थापकत्वं); and this is equally against experience. (4) The advocate asserts that verbal knowledge of a thing possessed of qualities is the cause of the substantive at the exclusion of its attributes (विशिष्टोपस्थितेर्विशेष्यमात्रशाब्दहेतुत्वं न तु विशिष्टशाब्दबोधहेतुत्वम्); and this is contradictory to the rule of experience. (5) The advocate has to accept that the knowledge of the thing is possible, though it is not meant by words (उपस्थितिं विनैव शाब्दहेतुत्वम्); but this is not really the rule.*

Moreover, the knowledge which is produced from words such as "Thou art That" cannot cancel the world, (a) because it is produced from words which are imagined (कल्पित) or superimposed by ignorance ; (b) because it is itself born of ignorance ; (c) because it is supported in the

* Some of the advocates think that Reality which is to be known is fit to be perceived, hence its knowledge should be intuitive and not indirect. But this is not correct. If knowledge would become direct because of its object being fit to be perceived, then the inference about the difference between the body and the self would become an intuitive perception. If in cases where the identity of the knower is objectified, there is a production of direct knowledge, then by the inference "God is non-different from me, because He is conscious like myself," there should also be direct apprehension, and by the statement "you are qualified with all-knowingness and the like," there should be direct knowledge But this is not experienced. Hence the above assumption should be rejected.

Moreover, according to the advocate, the knowledge of those attributes of the substratum which remain veiled and are not manifested during its manifestation of differences (भेद) drives out ignorance Hence the knowledge of Consciousness and Existence is not contradictory to the root-ignorance, but the knowledge of its infinity, attributelessness and the like is required to remove ignorance. And Reality is not perceived as such.

knower which is born of ignorance; (d) because it is produced from hearing dependent on the imagined teacher; (e) because it is of the nature of one's own mental modification imagined by himself and (f) because it is produced through words co-operated by the illusion of their purport as is the case with knowledge produced from words which eliminate the bondage of dream.

Advocate :—The intuition or direct apprehension is not produced all at once through words; but words at first produce indirect knowledge and afterwards produce direct knowledge. To explain, words which are incapable of producing direct knowledge first will produce direct knowledge by the co-operation of particular impressions arising out of discrimination.

Critic :—This cannot be. Because words have the nature of producing indirect knowledge, that nature cannot be removed or altered even through a thousand co-operates. What is adventitious cannot be the nature of anything. If it can be so, then there will be the destruction of the intrinsic nature of a thing. That is, a source of valid knowledge cannot be of a dependent nature. If the word is so dependent, it will no more be a source of valid knowledge. So words cannot in any case forsake their intrinsic nature. The effects produced from the same kind of material cannot be varied. If that were possible, then from only one material, all sorts of things would become produced and one effect would have relation to causes of contradictory kinds. So words cannot at first be the cause of indirect knowledge and then that of direct knowledge.*

* The view of this class of advocates viz. in the case of the knowledge of tunes what is indirectly known at first becomes afterwards directly known through practice, is not tenable. There also the meaning of sounds uttered by one is not directly perceived by another,

Now let us show that by thought (मनन) the alleged Reality cannot be realised. Thought is discursive i. e. it proceeds by argument or reasoning and not intuitive. The knowledge of Reality acquired through thought is based upon the recognition of persistence (अन्वय) and non-persistence (व्यतिरेक) of the witness (आत्मा) and the witnessed (अनात्मा). It is held that the witness remains unchanged in three stages (waking, dream and dreamless sleep), whereas the witnessed does not do so. Hence this knowledge has for its object the thing having a difference, therefore the knowledge of such an object cannot refer to the Reality which is without difference. Though by having removed the forms of the not-self namely bodies etc. the self is referred to through the above process (viz. persistence and non-persistence), still because it is referred to as different from the not-self and because difference is not of the nature of the undifferentiated and uniform self, the knowledge about difference does not refer to self's unique nature as is the case with doubt and misapprehension.

but the sounds only are directly perceived at the beginning; hence through practice merely the incomprehensibility of sounds is eliminated, but practice does not become the cause of direct knowledge of the meaning of tunes. Sometimes the stringing together of tunes sung by one is well understood by another quickly. This experience is due to the skilfulness in practice. It displays the tune only, but does not give the direct apprehension of the meaning of it. If it could, then everyone would apprehend that meaning directly, because every song reaches everybody's ears in the same way and also the song is of one nature. If it could be directly known, then there should not be ignorance, doubt and misapprehension about anything heard. Or, at the time of practising that science, the tune uttered by the teacher is directly known by the pupil even at the beginning. It is not indirect because the sounds are known directly by ears and the tunes are attributes of the sound. And its practice is the cause of its fixation only. Hence it does not illustrate the assumption of what is indirectly understood being directly known through practice.'

Besides, in the state when ignorance is being experienced as false the existence of ignorance has to be accepted ; and when ignorance is accepted, the knowledge of Reality in that stage must be a thing caused by ignorance. Besides, the cancelling knowledge is of three kinds :—(1) " this is not difference, (2) " there is no difference " and (3) " another appeared as different ", and all these have a reference to knowledge of difference and so how can they negate mere difference ? Thus the thought or discriminative knowledge of Reality such as " I am Brahman " " there is no duality " is delusional : it takes for its object only mundane existence which is of a dual nature.

Now let us show that by meditation the intuition of Reality is not possible. Meditation is nothing but the repetition of ideas about a known thing, and so it is not by itself a means of valid knowledge. Meditation is a mental activity and is of the nature of a particular thought, hence it is not a source of valid cognition. Meditation is an unbroken flow of remembrance, so it is not even direct cognition. Thus it cannot at all be said to be a direct and valid cognition of Reality.* The thought produced from

* The knowledge which is produced through organs of knowledge is direct. So the organs like eye, ear etc. are taken as the means of arriving at correct knowledge about external things. Among internal things the self is accepted by the advocate as self-luminous, and joys, sorrows etc. are directly known by the self. Hence mind has no uncommon object to refer to and therefore it should not be acknowleged as an inner instrument of knowledge. The mind gets modified as knowledge, so it is the material cause of these modifications and hence it cannot be an instrument of knowledge. Mind becomes helpful to other means of arriving at correct knowledge, hence it is not an instrument of knowledge as is the case with light and the like. So mind is in no case the cause of direct knowledge. Because mind is not an instrument of direct knowledge, Reality cannot be intuited by mind. Hence by the mental modification ·d meditation, Reality cannot be realised.

indirect knowledge cannot be the producer of intuitive perception. Even though the inference of fire is repeated a thousand times it does not produce the intuition of fire. The thing which is understood indirectly, though really existent, does never manifest itself in thoughtful intuition in its intrinsic nature. The intuition due to the ripeness of meditation does not manifest the real nature of a thing.

It has already been shown in pages 465–468 that the Reality cannot be intuited in trance with thought. In trance without thought there cannot be apprehension of any thing because there cannot be any apprehension in the absence of thought and the presence of apprehension would negate trance without thought. Moreover, in trance without thought there is no presence of words (either perceived or remembered) which will provoke the indeterminate modification of mind.

Thus it is proved that the intuition or direct knowledge of non-dual attributeless Reality is not possible, because outer senses or mind cannot objectify it and words produce merely an indirect knowledge of it. Now, as by knowledge, the elimination of ignorance is not proved to be possible, how can the attainment of liberation through the destruction of ignorance be established?

II

Moreover, Pure Brahman should be taken by the advocate as the support as well as the object of the root-ignorance, that ignorance cannot be eliminated except by the knowledge of Pure Brahman. But if it becomes the object of knowledge, then owing to its relation with the mental modification called knowledge its purity will be destroyed and the falsity of Pure Brahman will be

unavoidable. At the time of modification, Pure Brahman becomes affected by the attribute of the nature of modification, hence its purity will be impossible and therefore the manifestation of Pure Brahman cannot be through a mental modification. Though as determinate, Brahman may become the object, still its pure nature can never be an object of knowledge. The modification which does not objectify Pure Brahman cannot eliminate the ignorance which has for its object Pure Brahman.

Advocate :—Though it is contradiction to accept mental modification as referring to the undivided form of Reality or as having the property of the undivided Reality, still the denial of all particulars can be said to be of that form.

Critic :—In that case, owing to the absence of all particulars, there will be the absence of the general too. Moreover, the differenceless Brahman is not of the form of the general and the denial of the nature of negation cannot have for its object the positive undivided Reality.

Advocate :—Let it be accepted that the knowledge which drives out ignorance has for its object a qualified entity.

Critic :—That cannot be. The qualified entity is superimposed and hence its knowledge will be illusory.

Advocate :—The knowledge which drives out ignorance has for its object Brahman as determinate, but it does not take determination or condition for its object, so it is not illusory.

Critic :—This cannot be. Without the objectification of the condition, the objectification of the conditioned is

not possible. Moreover, by the knowledge of one thing, the removal of ignorance of another thing is neither seen nor heard. By qualified knowledge, the ignorance about that object may be destroyed, but the non-elimination of the ignorance about Pure Brahman will remain as before even when such knowledge occurs.

Moreover, the advocate accepts the theory of the self-validity (स्वतः प्रामाण्य) of knowledge, so he must admit that knowledge knows itself. It is not possible that what cannot manifest its own self is at the same time self-valid or self-luminous. When the objectification of knowledge is of the character of luminosity knowledge must have its own objectification of the nature of luminosity. Knowledge being self-luminous, when it illumines its object it will itself become illumined. Hence knowledge by having objectified Brahman will also manifest itself. So it has for its object the effects of ignorance which are of its own nature and therefore it will not have for its object what is not ignorance and its effect. Thus it follows that because ignorance has not for its object the conditional form of Brahman and has for its object its pure form, whereas knowledge has for its object the condition of the nature of its own self and has not for its object Pure Brahman, therefore they refer to different objects, and so knowledge will not destroy root-ignorance.

The contradiction between knowledge and ignorance should be taken as referring to the same object. In the present case the particular knowledge of Brahman because of its being included within the world must be produced from the ignorance of Brahman. So the particular ignorance by which the knowledge of Brahman is produced must be admitted as remaining in the moment after the rise of

the knowledge of Brahman. And at the presence of the ignorance of Brahman, the particular knowledge which rises and whose production is due to the ignorance of Brahman should be accepted as referring to an unreal object. This is owing to the ignorance of Brahman which produces the said knowledge. Hence that knowledge will have for its object particularised Brahman, and therefore it has not for its object pure and portionless Brahman. Thus due to their difference of reference, there will be no contradiction between the two. That is, ignorance abides by concealing the Pure Brahman, and knowledge by being produced is not fit to objectify Pure Brahman, because knowledge has for its material cause ignorance. Because ignorance refers to Pure Brahman, so, as long as Brahman remains as veiled by ignorance, the knowledge of Brahman too should be asserted and so these two have different objects and their contradiction cannot be asserted.

Knowledge which is a mental modification attains itself through ignorance, so it cannot be of the nature of the destruction of ignorance. So it is necessary to admit that ignorance having produced modification will remain as long as the substratum of modification lasts. It cannot be that when this material cause will disappear, the effect will abide. But the advocate admits that knowledge is of the nature of the destruction of ignorance and thus he contradicts himself. Besides, modification is of the nature of the destruction of ignorance and the destruction of ignorance is merely a modification, so oneself is taken as the cause of the destruction of itself and this is contradictory. And oneself cannot be the cause of oneself through the difference of form because causality which exists previously cannot be applicable in the case of the alleged production of oneself by oneself. These remarks repudiate the advocate's view that final knowledge

by having caused the cessation of the world (because there is *contradiction* between knowledge and *ignorance*) becomes destroyed itself. Because by having demolished the whole universe separate from Reality, the final modification cannot attain to itself and because the causality of oneself towards the destruction of oneself cannot be acknowledged, the cause of the destruction of final modification cannot be determined.

To elucidate:—This knowledge which destroys ignorance cannot be destroyed by its object namely Brahman. That pure consciousness is not accepted to be the cause of anything and all the impure entities are taken as destroyed without a residue. Hence it cannot be taken as being destroyed by any other inexplicable entity. Similarly, it cannot be said that it is destroyed by that destruction, because it cannot be determined whether that destruction is different from Existence or non-different from it, whether it is real or false. If the destruction of knowledge is without a cause, then it will contradict its occasionality, and the destruction will become beginningless and will be devoid of any counter-entity. So in the long run it comes to this that the ultimate knowledge is destroyed by itself. And this is improper. By a mere counter-entity destruction is never seen. Nor can it be said that by another knowledge it becomes eliminated. The knowledge which eliminates this knowledge is also a knowledge, and so if by another knowledge it becomes eliminated, then also this elimination will happen successively and there will be an infinite regression. If to avoid the above fault it is admitted that the knowledge which eliminates it is neither destroyed by itself nor by any other, then that knowledge will remain

and as a result of it the ego and the body cannot be eliminated*

Moreover, modification as well as mind are effects of root-ignorance, so it cannot destroy its material cause. According to the advocate, the effect is not absolutely different from its material cause, but exists merely through the existence of the cause. So it cannot remain separate from and be instrumental in dispelling its material cause. On the contrary its existence is impossible without the existence of the said cause. Because the effect has non-contradiction with its own material cause, it is not possible for it to destroy the root-ignorance. Though we find

*The advocate cites on this point examples such as those of *Kataka*-dust (कतकरज) and fire without fuel. In the first example, they observe, the dust by destroying the dirt (mud) of water becomes destroyed itself, and in the second example fire which wholly burned the fuel does not require any other for extinguishing it But these examples are not relevant It is not a fact that the mud in water is destroyed by the dust but it becomes decomposed (विश्लिष्ट) merely And the dust does not become destroyed itself. The mere dirt is not the cause of its own decomposition (विभाग) or of its reaching the bottom (अध पतन). The illustration of fire without fuel, is also not accurate, because at the destruction of fire without fuel, fire does not of itself become destroyed. but it disappears at the disappearance of its support, and so the disappearance of the support alone is the uncommon cause there, and fire is there a cause as a mere counter-entity (प्रतियोगीमुद्रा) and not as the uncommon cause of its own destruction Or let fire be the uncommon cause of the destruction of fire, even in that case mere fire cannot be taken to be the cause there; hence the destruction of fire without fuel is not the illustration of one's being the cause of its own destruction But in the present case mere knowledge of Brahman is asserted to be the cause of the destruction of the knowledge of Brahman. So the illustration is inapplicable The cause-effect-relation is due to priority and posteriority and so with regard to the destruction of final knowledge this knowledge itself cannot be the required cause.

knowledge driving out ignorance, yet no cause-effect-relation is found between particular knowledge and the particularised ignorance.*

*The conjunction of fire which destroys cloth cannot be cited as an example of the contradiction between the cause and the effect. (Other examples given are not to the point at all, because they are efficient causes of effects, while here we are concerned with material cause) When fire burns the cloth what happens is this that the fire-atoms enter into the dual atoms of cloth and produce a combination (सन्धान) dissimilar to the previous one. So the destruction of the cloth is due to the decomposition (विश्लेष) of parts which produce the cloth In this case the atoms of heat by decomposing very rapidly the parts of the cloth destroy the cloth also So it is not due to the destruction of the inherent cause (समवायिकारण). Moreover, with regard to things (having parts) up to double atoms, the conjunction of fire should be asserted as successive and it should be admitted that the destruction of the whole is preceded by the destruction of its parts and so the destruction of the parts should be asserted as due to the destruction of the non-inherent cause (असमवायिकारण – conjunction) Thus it cannot be said that the cloth becomes destroyed simultaneously (without succession) with the fibre and the thread.

Besides, according to the advocate who holds the doctrine of the existent effect, in empirical state, the destruction of the effect has some limit. So it should be supposed that the destruction ends somewhere in some part and that final part is imperishable. Hence he should also accept that the cloth is destroyed preceded by the destruction of the conjunction of two parts which are imperishable. Thus on the strength of such an example to describe the destruction of the effect with its material cause, that is to say, destruction of the ignorance of Brahman by the knowledge of Brahman does not merely contradict reasoning, but also contradict the theory of non-dualism. Moreover, according to the advocate destruction is not any negation as other philosophers hold, but it is the abiding of the effect in the form of the cause. It is characterised as the attainment of another state and this attainment is nothing but a temporal particularity. Therefore in the present case, it must be admitted that the cloth by being destroyed does not lose itself altogether, but attains to another

Moreover, according to the advocate, ignorance is the cause of bondage; so after determination of the nature of the negation of ignorance his conclusion about liberation can stand. But his conclusion is not justifiable. Here it may be asked what is the nature of the negation of cosmic ignorance? Is it prior negation or destruction or absolute negation or mutual negation? It cannot be called prior negation, for only things which have beginning can have prior negation. The ignorance which is believed to be without beginning cannot have prior negation. Moreover, prior negation is beginningless, so it cannot be achieved by knowledge The negation of ignorance cannot be described as the negation called destruction. If the destruction of ignorance is truly existent (पारमार्थिक), then it will not be achieved by knowledge If it is empirical (व्यावहारिक), then it (destruction) will be negated by knowledge, as the advocate observes to be the case with the world. Hence the counter-entity of that destruction namely ignorance will emerge again. And if that negation is taken as illusory (प्रातिभासिक), then the counter-entity of that negation namely ignorance will be real, because it is seen that the counter-entity of a negation of an illusory nature (i. e. the witness-consciousness) is real. The above criticism would apply equally to the view that the negation of cosmic ignorance is absolute negation. An absolute negation distinct from three types of existences just mentioned is unknown. The view that the alleged negation is a mutual negation is not also reasonable. Mutual negation and its counter-entity are not

state Similarly when through the knowledge of Brahman the ignorance of Brahman will be destroyed the ignorance of Brahman will attain to another state That again is of the nature of a temporal particularity Hence the destruction of the ignorance of Brahman is some temporal particularity. So how by that can your desired result be made possible ?

contradictory to each other, and as such the existence of the one does not imply the non-existence of the other. So the alleged mutual negation and cosmic ignorance will persist together and there will be no annihilation of ignorance.*

* Moreover, we ask, is the elimination of ignorance of the nature of the self or different from it? The first alternative is not sound If the elimination is self alone, owing to its existence during all times, there will always be the absence of ignorance and it need not be caused. As the elimination is regarded as due to a cause, if it be conceived as identical with the self, the self also would have to be conceived as caused and it could not be regarded as the support of the beginningless ignorance. With regard to the second alternative it is to be considered whether (1) it is existent or (2) non-existent or (3) both or (4) is it inexplicable (1) It cannot be defined as existent, because the negation having for its counter-entity the inexplicable (ignorance) cannot itself have a real existence According to the advocate the 'seen' or the 'witnessed' means the objectification of consciousness and it is dependent on the illusory identity of the object with consciousness, so the elimination of igorance, which must belong to the category of the 'seen' cannot be real. (2) If it is non-existent, then it cannot be attained throgh or be the object of knowledge (3) This alternative is not logically conceivable, because it involves self-contradiction (4) The fourth alternative is not also tenable An inexplicable effect is, according to their theory, invariably caused by ignorance, and if negation of ignorance is an inexplicable effect, then this also must be the product of ignorance So even in liberation ignorance as its material cause would continue, and the phenomenal knowledge of which it is the object would also continue This implies that there would be no liberation Besides, the elimination of ignorance, being inexplicable, must be false and in order to adhere to its falsity whose essence consists in being inexplicable, it maust be maintained that the said elimination is capable of being eliminated by knowledg because, according to you, falsity is nothing but liability to be eliminated by knowledge. But at the time of liberation, the knowledge which can eliminate it is not possible, because in that stae the instruments or materials (सामग्री) of knowledge are absent So in order to make knowledge possible, there would be the annihilation of liberation, and therefore there would again be mundane existence

Hence at the end you have to assert it to be of a kind different from the four kinds stated above But that is not possible, since a category other than any of the four enumerated above is inconceivable. According to you, the non-dual Reality alone is explicable and everything other than it is inexplicable. The elimination of ignorance,

it has been shown, is not eligible to be included within either of these two categories, and no third category beyond these two is admitted Therefore, you have no means to determine the nature of elimination of ignorance. Besides, negation of ignorance being regarded as an object of knowledge (दृश्य) must be false, because according to you what is of the nature of an object is false. If this view is not stuck to, then your assertion that knowableness is the ground of falsity has to be abandoned. Besides, if the elimination of ignorance is other than the self, then it must be the witnessed. Then consistently with your view of the impossibility of the relation between the seer and the seen, its falsity must necessarily be granted, and so it would not be established that the elimination of ignorance falls in a category of a fifth kind. Besides, the negation which has for its counter-entity the inexplicable cannot be of a distinct category, because the negation has invariably an existence which is equal to that of its counterentity. Besides, if the elimination of ignorance is of the fifth kind, then its relation with time cannot be explained and therefore it would be incapable of being proved by arguments which have a temporal reference.

Besides, it may be asked whether the said elimination is of the essence of Brahman or is it the modification of knowledge (वृत्ति). The first cannot be, because it is eternally established The second cannot be, because ignorance being eliminated, due to the absence of the material cause, there cannot be the production of modification. Moreover, this elimination of Ignorance is taken by the advocates as unreal, so its essence, its production and destruction are also unreal, hence their elimination also is required and in this way the elimination of those eliminations are also required and so on, and thus you are merged in the mire of an infinite regression In order to avoid this infinite regression, if the elimination is accepted as of the nature of Brahman, then the elimination of the nature of Brahman being pervasive (अनुवर्तमान), the world would not have been produced at all and hence phenomenal experience or practical dealings (व्यवहार) would not be established (see pages 597–598)

The Doctrine of भावाद्वैत (non-duality of the positive—elimination of ignorance being negative), however, is not accurate If there can be the existence of non-cancelled difference in some place (negation of ignorance), then elsewhere also it may exist and such a recognition cannot be said to be contradictory, hence the non-dualistic theory will be contradicted. If negation is real, then it must be admitted that there is negativity and its relation and the property of its substratum and the relation of negation with Brahman and in Brahman there will be the property of being support of this negation; so the doctrine of non-dualism in the shape of the non-duality of the positive fails

III.

Moreover, let us again discuss whether the view of the advocate viz the attainment of liberation through the elimination of root-ignorance by direct knowledge can be substantiated. This view would imply that even after the destruction of ignorance the body and the mind and their operations in the phenomenal world can continue, because direct knowledge must be of the nature of a certain modification of the mind. But can the phenomenal mind continue to exist after the disappearance of the root-ignorance, in accordance with the theory under review? Since at the destruction of the material cause, the continued existence of the effect is not possible, the existence of the phenomenal mind and body must demand the existence of their material cause. Hence it cannot be consistently maintained that the ignorance is the material cause of the phenomenal mind and that the latter continues to exist even after the destruction of the former. Thus the possibility of the attainment of liberation through the direct realisation of the vanishing of ignorance would logically imply that ignorance is not the material cause of the phenomenal mind and body. It may be said that ignorance being not a truly real substance is not regarded as the true material cause of the mind and body, but that it is Brahman or the Absolute Spirit, which is the real noumenal material cause of the phenomenal mind and body and ignorance is the neither-real-nor-unreal inexplicable entity through which Brahman manifests Itself as such phenomenal entities. But this assertion cannot be rationally maintained. Since Brahman is conceived as the attributeless changeless non-dual self-luminous Reality, it cannot consistently be regarded as the real material cause of the changing non-luminous plurality of subjective

and objective phenomena. Had It been the real material cause, even through the instrumentality of ignorance, the plurality of effects of this eternal cause would have been eternal and liberation would have been impossible. Further, ignorance being the necessary pre-condition of the production and continuance of the effects, either ignorance also must be eternal, rendering liberation impossible, or its destruction would involve the destruction of the effects, rendering the experience of its destruction by any mind out of the question. Thus in no case would the experience of liberation be possible.

An appeal to the doctrine of *Prārabdha karma* to account for the continuance of the phenomenal mind and body after the realisation of the Truth is also of no avail. At the destruction of root-ignorance the fructifying *karma* also cannot remain, just as at the destruction of the thread the cloth which is its product cannot continue to exist. In order to provide for the possibility of the continuance of the mind and body produced from fructifying *karma*, the advocates suppose the continuance (अनुवृत्ति) of ignorance also for sometime. But in that case true knowledge would lose its nature of being the dispeller of ignorance. It would go against the view of the advocate that when there is direct knowledge of Brahman, there is the elimination of ignorance, and in the absence of direct knowledge there is the absence of the elimination of ignorance. It may be argued that the direct knowledge of absolute truth does not destroy the entire root-ignorance, immediately as it is attained, but when there is release from embodied existence after the reaping of the results of fructifying *karma*. It is said that the root-ignorance is possessed of two functions, namely, veiling the true nature of the Reality and causing It to appear as something

other than Itself. Of these, the function of veiling is immediately destroyed by the intuition of Brahman, but so long as the fructifying *karma* goes on operating the illusory appearance is not destroyed and the function of ignorance in that aspect continues. This argument, however, involves a contradiction. How can the same Ignorance be destroyed and still go on operating? It cannot be asserted that mere elimination of the power of ignorance is meant, because there can be no difference between ignorance and its powers or functions. If difference between the two is accepted, then the root-ignorance itself or its function of producing illusory appearance will never be eliminated, because of the absence of that which eliminates it. Besides, the alleged cancellation is of the form "everything except Brahman is false". In this case, if the root-ignorance which is great and strong is dissolved, then how can one part of it be not dissolved? If it is not dissolved, then this ignorance would be real and not false. What is non-cancelled by the cancellation of ignorance cannot even be cancelled by another knowledge and elimination without cause cannot be granted. It cannot be said that it is eliminated by the natural elimination of fructifying *karma*, because the mere destruction of effect cannot be the destroyer of the cause. Nor can it be said that the previous knowledge eliminates it because it is irrational to suppose that the knowledge could not produce the effect of eliminating ignorance when it was present, but produces this effect when it is no longer present. It cannot also be said that the changeless non-dual Consciousness (स्वरूपज्ञान), i. e., the self-luminosity of Brahman-self, eliminates it, because it is not taken to be contradictory to it; on the contrary, that consciousness is supposed by the exponents as the substratum of the ignorance.

Moreover, it may be asked whether the ignorance, which had been the cause of the bondage of the individual whom you now suppose to have destroyed it and attained liberation, is the same as or different from the Cosmic ignorance which inexplicably pertained to, veiled and particularised the nature of Brahman the Absolute and thereby created this apparent objective world. If the ignorance of the individual is in fact nothing but the Cosmic ignorance, it is again asked whether by the truth-realisation of one individual this ignorance with its effects is eliminated or not. If not, then evidently there is no liberation, because ignorance and the consequent bondage are still present. If this ignorance be eliminated, then how can there still exist the plurality of individuals and the experience of the world of diversities? It does not appear reasonable to assert that though this world is eliminated in reference to the individual who realises truth it is not eliminated to other individuals who have not realised truth. How can the same one identical entity be destroyed with reference to some and quite alive and operative with reference to others? The elimination or negation or destruction of a thing has reference to that thing itself and not to any other person or thing, though the elimination or negation or destruction may be caused by a particular person or thing. A pot, which may be destroyed by a particular person or a particular piece of stone, does not become destroyed only in reference to that person or stone. The root-ignorance being one and the same for all individuals in bondage, if it be once destroyed by the true knowledge attained by any individual, it ought to vanish once for all, and all the illusions created by it ought also to disappear. This should mean that the apparent world of the plurality of the conditioned selves and the objects of their experience ought to cease to exist with the liberation of any one individual. If it be asserted that even at the elimination

of ignorance, the world is not eliminated, then either it should be admitted that the world is not the effect of ignorance or it would violate the causal principle that in the absence of the material cause the effect cannot continue to exist.*

Moreover, at the time of liberation, would there be the elimination of the intuition of Truth or not? If, at the time of liberation, the elimination of the intuition of Truth is not admitted, then either the intuition of Truth should be regarded as pertianing to the noumenal nature of Brahman or it should be held that this intuition of Truth is also illusory and that this illusion continues even at the time of liberation. Both these conclusions contradict the fundamental doctrine of the advocates of the theory. If on the other hand it is admitted that the elimination of the intuition of Truth occurs in liberation, then after that, owing to the presence of its material, the presence of the illusion of ignorance is unavoidable, which is of course incompatible with liberation.

Now, let us examine the theory of liberation after death (विदेहमुक्ति). Here let us examine the theory of becoming one with bliss. Is that bliss experienced during liberation or not? If not experienced, then though existent, it is as good as non-existent, because it is not enjoyed Bliss which is not enjoyable is not only incapable of being an object of desire,

* If ignorance is with parts, then it will be an effect. If this is not the case, then it will either be altogether eliminated or not If ignorance is an effect, then before the production of ignorance the selves are to be regarded as liberated and hence there should be no bondage. And if ignorance is taken as partless, then when by some knowledge ignorance is wholly eliminated, universal liberation ought to be the result.

but is incapable of being even conceived. If however it is held that bliss due to its immediacy alone, would be an object of desire, then because bliss becomes directly manifested to someone that would have been the object of desire to everyone. So it should be admitted that bliss related to oneself becomes the object of desire by being directly apprehended by him. Hence because the liberated self is bereft of the perception of bliss, it cannot be object of his desire.

It may be said that we desire dreamless sleep and trance without thought, in which there is no object to be experienced, so we may desire to attain the state of bliss, though there may not be any phenomenal enjoyment in it. But the argument does not hold good. Before going to bed we hope that we shall awake again and therefore the cessation of temporary trouble is sought by way of sleep. We hope that we shall arise from trance with reverie of our mind suppressed, therefore we desire it. But in the case of liberation, otherwise is the case, so it is of no value. No one will make effort to attain to the liberation with the idea that though he should be lost, still there would abide some consciousness other than him. Let the sea of joy remain, but if I am not there to enjoy it, it is worthless to me. It is like chopping of the head to relieve a headache. Mere joy, if at all conceivable, is not the object of desire, but its enjoyment is the object of desire.

Now if it is said that joy is experienced, then its cause must be asserted. But the advocate of this view cannot do that. At the cessation of the body, sense-organs, etc., there is nothing to produce joy. The substratum of non-eternal knowledge is non-eternal and hence it must be perishable. So

in liberation which is desired by them, the experience of the self as of the nature of bliss is impossible.*

* Having accepted the self as joy, we say the above. But there is no proof about the thing itself. The advocate admits the self (not the ego) as joy, because it is the object of unconditional (अनौपाधिक) love Now it may be asked what do you mean by the word 'unconditional'. If by this is meant that it is not dependent on the desire of any other object, then it would be with regard to the ego and not with regard to something beyond the ego. If it is meant that it is not dependent on the relation with any other thing, then it is impossible with regard to consciousness (self), because such love is always due to the relation of the ego with consciousness. Everyone has got the unconditional desire ("Let there be my joy") relating to Consciousness particularised by one's own mind-stuff and to joy related to one's own self Besides, if through the illusion of identity with the mental modification of joy the self is designated as joy, then shell even would have been designated by the word 'silver' Besides, a thing may impart joy, but from this we cannot conclude that it is joy itself. The notion of the self as something dear cannot be cited as a proof of the non-dual non-differentiated attributeless joy, because it is experienced in a contrary form. The fact that outside things are felt dear cannot be taken as the proof of the above The outside things appear dear to different persons in accordance with the different grades of agreeable feelings produced from contact with them, and before and after such feelings, there is no proof about joy being inherent in them The fact that we remember joy just after awakening from dreamless sleep cannot be taken as a proof about it. The statement 'I slept happily' can be disputed Even if it is accepted, it may be a case of inference from the temperament of waking It may be that because the ego qualified with joy is experienced now, dreamless sleep becomes a matter of inference. 'I slept happily' may mean non-remembrance of any fickleness and pain relating to the time previous to waking together with the experience of delight relating to present time, so it may be the inference of a mental modification bereft of the modification having the form of the object Thus 'I slept happily' may not be a matter of remembrance, but of present imagination Granting it to be a case of remembrance it cannot be determined to what this joy belongs—whether it is due to subtle mental modification or to modification of ignorance or to some consciousness with or apart from them This joy may be a state of modification because it is believed by the advocates of the view that in this modification, there is the *sattva* element.

CHAPTER X

The Doctrine of the Harmony of all views (समन्वयवाद) Examined.

We now proceed to the consideration of another doctrine, which claims to be a living harmony or synthesis of all the religio-philosophical theories. The history of human culture shows that from time immemorial various mutually conflicting views have been cherished and sought to be rationally established by different religious sects about the ultimate Reality or Realities underlying the phenomenal universe and the highest ideal of human life to be achieved by man's moral and spiritual self-discipline, and in accordance with these views divergent modes of life and diverse kinds of social and religious practices have been prevalent in the different sections of the human society, not unoften leading to clashes and animosities among neighbouring peoples. It is also found that the urge for unity and harmony has not been inactive in the human mind. Reason demands unity of the ultimate truth and life demands harmony of relations in the society. This has led some specially liberal-minded and spiritually advanced reformers in all ages to make serious attempts to bring about a harmony or synthesis among the current conflicting views and to create in men's minds a sympathetic attitude towards each others' modes of life and forms of religious discipline.

Different forms of attempts at synthesising the views.

These harmonising attempts have been made in different ways. (1) Attempts have been made by some great thinkers to propound such a comprehensive theory as may include the other theories and point the basis of their final unity. (2)

Some great scholars have analysed and compared the religio-metaphysical views recorded in the scriptures of the different religious systems and the sayings of the saints belonging to them, and sought to discover their point of similarity and unity in fundamental respects. (3) Some great religious teachers have tried to show that every theory is a particular mode of approach to the ultimate Truth and represents a particular aspect of that Truth according to the particular angle of vision from which it is viewed. (4) Others again have represented every particular theory as a particular stage in the pathway to the Absolute Truth. (5) Others again have asserted that the Absolute Truth, which is a matter of spiritual realisation, underlies or is involved in all the religio-philosophical systems, while the divergences among the expounded theories are due to the divergent modes of interpreting the same realisation.

The futility of such attempts shown historically and theoretically.

Historically considered, none of these attempts have been successful. It is evident from the presence, in all ages and countries, of a plurality of conflicting views and of a more or less acute antagonism among the advocates of the different systems. Theoretically considered also, such attempts have not the rational probability of all-round success.

(1) Take the case of the first line of efforts in this direction. The advocates of every particular view maintain and strenuously try to establish that their own view is the most comprehensive one. They hold that every other view is either false or a partial aspect of their own view. If any new philosophy appears on the scene, claiming that it

is the most comprehensive view and it can harmonise all the already prevalent conflicting theories, we find that none of these old theories acknowledge the superiority or submit to the patronising attitude of the new theory. The result is that the number of conflicting views is increased.

(2) The second attempt to bring about the synthesis of all views cannot be crowned with success. By comparative study of Religion and Philosophy we find that every particular system of religion or philosophy agrees in some aspects and disagrees in various other aspects with the other systems. The points in which one system differs from others and for the sake of which it has to come in collision with others are no less fundamental from its own point of view than those in which it agrees with other systems. The arguments which one system adduces for the refutation of the specific views of other systems are as integral parts as those which it puts forward in support of its own specific views. Hence a general system made up of the common and universal tenets of all the particular systems will not be able to comprise them all. The result is that the particular systems do not surrender their individuality to the general system; but what happens is that this general system itself becomes another particular system by the side of them.

(3) The third form of the attempt also is equally fruitless. Every theory claims to be the custodian of the complete conception of the true nature of the Absolute Truth. It tries to establish this claim on the strength of all the available sources of valid knowledge and all the arts of convincing reasoning. Any other doctrine that will come forward to show that these older theories represent only partial aspects of this Truth in accordance with their partiall view-points, will necessarily come in conflict with them, wil

have to logically argue with them and will become one of the rival theories.

(4) The fourth method of reconciliation is also for the same reason bound to be futile. Every system does in its own way establish its own conception of the Absolute Truth and the final goal of life, by refuting all other views about it. Hence what is regarded as a particular stage in the pathway to Truth by one system is sought to be proved to be the realisation of Truth itself by another system. Why should any system admit its own ultimate Ideal traditionally valued and philosophically established by its advocates generation after generation, to be nothing more than a particular stage of a still higher Ideal, without adequate rational grounds for such admission. Hence the result is the same controversy and conflict.

(5) If the fifth method at compromise is adopted, no better success can be expected. This fifth form consists in preaching that the Absolute Truth is a matter of spiritual realisation or experience. But the validity of such experience is itself a controversial point. Even if we admit the validity of such experience, we cannot come to the desired conclusion. It is asserted by the advocates of this view that the ultimate character of what is spoken of as the Truth of spiritual realisation cannot be objectively known and communicated even to one's own discursive intellect, not to speak of its communication in an intelligible form to others. Now if what is experienced in the state of spiritual realisation cannot be made an object of thought and speech, it is as good as nothing from the point of view of philosophical discussion. In that case no judgment can be passed upon the other views with reference to and from the standpoint of that unascertained and incommunicable Truth. It is impossible

to examine whether those views rightly or wrongly, partially or fully, interpret it. Hence it becomes meaningless to assert that they are only different ways of interpreting the same Absolute Truth.

The greatest synthetic attempt of the present age.

We shall now proceed to the examination in greater details of the rational basis of the most recent and widely appealing attempt at the synthesis of all religions. This attempt is made by the followers of a great spiritual leader of the nineteenth century on the strength of what is claimed to be his extraordinary spiritual realisation.

This great spiritual teacher has categorically asserted that Brahman — the ultimate Reality — does not admit of being characterised in terms of logical concepts, which are necessarily subject to the laws of contradiction and Excluded Middle. But as we cannot help thinking and speaking of Him by means of the ideas and words we are capable of employing, we must, he teaches, indicate His supersensuous and super-rational and self-revealing character by such apparently self-contradictory and illogical statements, as that He is with attributes as well as without attributes, with form as well as without form, transcending the world as well as immanent in the world, the biggest of the big as well as the smallest of the small, etc. Thus whatever may be thought and spoken of Brahman is neither exclusively true nor absolutely false. Every particular way of characterising Brahman is the expression of a particular mode of viewing Him. Every such mode must involve a process of qualifying Him with attributes. When considered by themselves, they appear to

be contrary or contradictory to each other, but the contradictions disappear when considered with reference to Brahman.

The great Master has taught that Brahman or the ultimate Reality is one and that One is the true object of worship in all religious systems and the real Truth sought to be established in all philosophical systems. But the apparent differences in their conceptions about this Reality owe their origin:—(a) sometimes to different modes of expression, (b) sometimes to different partial realisations, (c) sometimes to different forms of the self-revelations of Brahman, and (d) sometimes to different relative points of view from which He is thought of. He used to make his ideas clear by means of illustration. (a) The illustration of the first is found in the case of 'water'. As the same water is spoken of in different names, such as water, aqua, *jal*, *pāni* etc, so the same Reality is spoken of as Brahman, God, Allah, Hari, Śiva, etc. (b) The second he illustrated by the parable of the Elephant and the blind men. The same elephant is the object of experience to four blind men, but one forms a conception of it by touching its legs, another by touching its ears, another by touching its belly and another by touching its trunk. Their conceptions differ, not because there are four different elephants or the same elephant really assumes different forms, but because they experience different features or aspects of the same elephant. The realisations and conceptions about the nature of Brahman also become different in the same way. (c) The illustration of the third source of conflict is found in the case of a chameleon. The chameleon appears at different times to different seers in different forms with different attributes, and consequently different ideas are formed about it. These ideas correspond to its particular appearances and

not to its essential nature. Similarly different men experience the different appearances of the Ultimate Reality and mistake a particular appearance for the complete nature of that Reality. (d) The illustration of the fourth is given by the example of the same woman being looked upon and described as mother in relation to one, wife in relation to another, daughter in relation to a third, mistress in relation to a fourth and so on. Similarly the same Brahman may be conceived and characterised in different ways in relation to the world, to the soul, to the devotee, to the lustful and so on. The mistake lies in regarding any one of these relations as the only true one constituting the essential and complete character of Brahman.

The Master further says that the Ultimate Reality transcending all relations and the relative attributes cannot be made an object of definite conception and speech; because from that point of view He exists alone without a second, the individual selves and world of diversities are completely merged in Him and become absolutely non-different from Him and the difference between the seer and the seen, the conceiver and the conceived, the speech and its object altogether disappears. The merging of the salt-puppet in the salt-ocean in its pursuit of the realisation of the latter is the illustration in point. From this absolute or unrelated view-point Brahman can be thought of by the negation of all determinations and all conceivable qualities and hence must be regarded as without attribute, without modification, neither cause nor effect, etc. But from the standpoint of the world of finite selves and material objects, He is to be conceived as the Cause, the Ground, the Substance, the Regulator of all that exists, and the final goal to be reached by the devotees.

His unique Power—the Power by which, being one He becomes many, being attributeless He becomes possessed of infinite attributes, being formless He assumes forms, being non-dual unrelated absolute Reality above time and space, He becomes related to various kinds of changing objects and events—is referred to as *Māyā*, addressed as Mother by the Master. The Power and the Reality, Māyā and Brahman, are one and cannot be really differentiated. The world again is the diversified manifestation of *Māyā* and as such is non-different from Her. Hence Brahman, Māyā and the world are really the same. Hence the world of finite spirits and objects is to be looked upon as existing within Him, as the manifestations of Him, and as sustained and governed by Him, and thus as essentially non-different from Him. But so long as ego is present, the difference between Brahman and the *Jeeva*, the infinite and the finite, the creator and the created, the Ruler and the ruled is inevitable.

Thus it is claimed that the doctrines of Absolute Non-dualism, Qualified non-dualism, Dualism, Dualism-Non-dualism are all recognised and harmonised in the teaching of this Master. The theories of real causation and illusory causation are both reconcilable here. The relations of absolute difference, absolute non-difference, difference-non-difference, have their place in these teachings and can be reconciled by the indications of the points of view, from which each of them is true.

The Master, however, did not arrive at his synthesis by any comparative study of Religion. He did not draw his philosophy from the combination of the universal elements of different religions and philosophical systems

It is asserted that all the truths that he taught were actually realised by him at the trance-states. Moreover, he is said to have actually practised the modes of spiritual discipline and meditation, taught in the scriptures of every prominent religious system of the world. It is also asserted that the Master experienced that all of them, if systematically pursued, lead to the same ultimate spiritual goal—the realisation of the Ultimate Truth. As the result of such experience he preached the most widely appreciated doctrine, viz. every view is a path to the same goal.

Critical Examination.

We have here briefly indicated the fundamental doctrines preached by the great spiritual Teacher and the method in which he sought to bring about a compromise among the conflicting religio-philosophical systems prevailing in the world. We are not in this book concerned with the moral, spiritual and social values of these teachings from the standpoint of the practical needs of the individuals, communities and nations of the present age What we are concerned with is their rational basis and logical validity, and from this standtpoint we shall try to make a critical estimate of them, as we have done in other cases. For this purpose we shall first take the fundamental doctrines as they are, consider them as philosophical theories propounded by the Master, and judge their logical values. We shall then discuss whether these doctrines can really and rationally bring about the desired compromise among the different systems. Lastly, we shall make our reflections upon the validity of the claim that these doctrines are the products of the actual realisation or intuition of the truths at the time of trance.

Master's fundamental Conception Analysed.

First of all let us consider the main philosophical views of the Master. The most fundamental doctrine upon which all his other teachings may be said to be based is that the Ultimate Reality or Brahman is with as well as without attribute, and He is the real substance as well as the real cause of this universe. We have previously criticised the theory according to which Brahman is the non-dual attributeless Reality, and have found that neither can this conception of the Ultimate Reality be logically established nor can it supply a rational and adequate explanation for the world-system We have also considered the theory according to which the Ultimate Reality is Brahman with supreme power and glorious attributes, who by virtue of His unique power modifies Himself into the world of plurality, while retaining His transcendent character unaffected. The logical untenability of this view also has been discussed at length. The Great Master, on the ground of his extraordinary spiritual experience, claims to have reached a plane of consciousness, from which both these conceptions of the Reality can be legitimately accepted as true in perfect harmony with each other. This acceptance of both these important rival theories and their merging into one may be of great practical importance for the purpose of putting an end, if possible, to the narrow sectarian outlook of their exponents and the unwholesome quarrels among their followers; but neither party can rationally accept this new synthetic doctrine as consistent with its own fundamental principle. The acceptance of one of these conceptions as true logically and necessarily leads to the rejection of the other, in accordance with the principle of contradiction. The synthesis appears to be dogmatic and irrational, and is therefore likely to be rejected by both parties on that ground.

Different Views of Brahman as the Cause of the World Considered.

The principle of causality is the basic principle on which each of the theories about the Ultimate Reality stands. Brahman as the cause of the universe is and can be conceived in three possible ways. He can be either merely the efficient cause, or merely the material cause, or both the efficient and material cause. The first two views are inconsistent with the non-duality of Brahman, and the last view must be accepted. If Brahman be regarded as merely the efficient cause of the world, one or more material causes other than Brahman must have to be recognised. Whether the material cause be of the nature of the plurality of material atoms, or of the nature of Energy existing outside of Brahman, the absolute oneness of the Ultimate Reality has to be abandoned. Similarly, if Brahman is regarded as merely the material cause of the world, one or more efficient causes which act upon Brahman and make Him produce the world have to be recognised. This is also inconsistent with the non-duality of Brahman, which is accepted by the Master.

Consequently, the third view, viz. that Brahman is by Himself the efficient and material cause of the world should be accepted. This unity of the efficient and mateial cause, again, is possible in five ways (1) Brahman transforms Himself into the world, (2) Brahman, by dint of His unique power modifies Himself into the world without losing His transcendent unity and character, (3) Brahman's power is modified into the world, but Brahman Himself remains untouched by this modification, still His power being identical with Himself, He is both the efficient and material cause, (4) the world in its

unmanifested state remains undifferentiated from Brahman and is of the nature of an attribute of Brahman, the world may thus be regarded as the expression of the attribute of Brahman and in this sense He is its absolute cause, (5) Brahman, being apparently conditioned by Ignorance, illusorily appears as the world, but in reality remains eternally the non-dual attributeless Reality.

Contradiction of the conceptions of Brahman as with and without attributes pointed out.

The different so-called non-dualistic schools have based their conceptions of the Ultimate Reality on one or the other of these views about causality and have inferred what the *nature of the Ultimate Reality must be in order to* satisfactorily account for the world-process. We have previously dealt with each of these views and pointed out the logical fallacies involved in each. Of these views the first four necessarily imply that the Ultimate Reality or Brahman is essentially possessed of power and attribute, and the doctrine of the attributelessness and powerlessness of Brahman can never be reconciled with them. The advocates of those views also have strongly criticised and condemned the theory of attributeless powerless Brahman. If the world is regarded as a real production or manifestation or modification of Brahman, Brahman can in no way be consistently regarded as attributeless or powerless. There is no strength in the argument that since, before the production of the world, no power or attribute of Brahman is manifested, therefore from the point of view of the worldless state Brahman can be called attributeless or powerless. Power or attribute, whether manifested or unmanifested, must be regarded as pertaining to the nature of Brahman, and He cannot be called attributeless and powerless. Further, this argument

would imply a real change of states of Brahman, which is not of course admitted. Nor is it of any philosophical use to say that from the worldly point of view He is with power and attributes, but apart from relation to the world He is not; because if the world is real, whether manifested or unmanifested, reference to the relation of the world cannot be avoided except by logical abstraction.

If on the other hand the world be regarded as an illusory appearance, whatever is predicated of Brahman with reference to this world, whether manifested or unmanifested, must be regarded as false. Hence from this standpoint the power and attributes of God must be regarded as false and must therefore be denied. The advocates of this view have quite justifiably fought against the reality of the power and attributes of Brahman.

Thus the view that Brahman is really with power and attributes as well as without power and attributes, can be neither logically justified nor practically able to reconcile the rival philosophical views. Hence we find that the very basic conception with which the great Spiritual Master sought to carry out his harmonising mission cannot be logically and philosophically justified.*

* This view cannot be reconciled with the Jaina conclusions (non-Vedic) because the Jainas recognise the world as dual i. e. as constituted of conscious (*jiva*) and unconscious (non-jiva) entities. According to them the world is not created by God Beyond *Karma-Law* there is no regulator of the world. They do not admit any non-dual consciousness as having Energy or attribute or as the substratum Similarly, the above view cannot be made compatible with the view of the Mīmāmsakas (Vedic), because they also, like the Jainas, regard the world as having no beginning and are of opinion that *Karma* alone is the regulator and there is no non-dual consciousness. The above view is hardly reconcilable with Buddhistic conception. According to the Buddhistic doctrine of impermanence (momentariness) of all conditions, physical and mental, things cannot be treated as productions of cosmic will (God), because there is no enduring ego that can work. Such a view is hardly in consonance with the Nihilistic Buddhism The Nihilists (i e the Mādhyamika-Buddhists who consider the world as not belonging to the four categories viz.

existent, non-existent, existent as well as non-existent, and inexplicable in the restricted Vedantic sense) refute production from one's own self (स्वत:) and from other self (परत) ; so they cannot admit the existence of either immanent or transcendent God According to this School both the consciousness (ज्ञान) and the unconscious (ज्ञेय) are illusory, so they do not acknowledge the existence of any real consciousness (Brahman without attribute) as the substratum of the illusory world. The above view cannot be harmonised with that of the Sānkhyas. According to the Sānkhyas the operation of *Prakrti* is natural and not intelligent. *Prakrti* is self-moved (स्वत: परिणामिणि). As motion (as *Rajas*) is an aspect of its being, the Sānkhyas do not recognise a principle of effectuation in *Prakrti* outside of its own nature (स्वभाव). Regular modification is the nature of *Prakrti*. The activity of Energy is not through the influence of any external agent because *Puruṣa* (selves) is inactive (witness of activity) and ego is an after-product. Hence the primordial modification of Energy is not the result of any will (will must necessarily be product arising from combination). The Sānkhyas do not regard the *Puruṣa* as non-dual or as the substance having *Prakrti* as its Energy or attribute, or as the substratum of *Prakrti*. Hence Brahman with or without attribute cannot be accepted by the Sānkhyas There cannot be any compromise of the said view with Pātañjala-conception, because, according to the Pātañjalas, there is no non-dual, undifferentiated consciousness with or without attribute. The Pātañjalas infer God as an all-knowing Person, on the ground that there must be a Supreme Personality in whom the gradation of knowledge, which we experience, must have its highest stage of development eternally realised. He is conceived by them as essentially self-fulfilled and unconcerned, i e. as one who does not create, preserve or destroy the world There cannot be any compromise of the said view with that of the Naiyāyika-Vaiśeṣikas, because according to them there is no such non-dual attributeless consciousness nor is the material cause (atoms) non-different from the efficient cause. Nor can the view be in agreement with the Pāśupata-Śaivas and Mādhva-Vaiṣṇavas, because they also accept the difference of the prime efficient cause (God) and the material cause (*Prakrti*). The view cannot be acceptable to the Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Caitanya, Ballabha, Srikantha, Vir-Śaiva schools and other sects of worshippers of the East, nor to the Christians and the Mohammedans and the other non-Indian theistic communities, because, according to them, God must be regarded as a self-conscious Personality and not as attributeless consciousness There will be no compromise of the said view with that of the Śankarites, because according to them that which is with attributes is illusory and hence there cannot be real identity of the Real and the unreal. Thus it is difficult to conceive how the all-harmonising mission of the Master can be fulfilled It becomes only one particular view amongst so many already existing views.

Master's explanations for the differences of views Examined.

Thus from the analysis of the Master's fundamental conception about the nature of the Ultimate Reality, and its comparison with other conceptions about the same earnestly maintained by different religio-philosophical systems, we are led to conclude that this conception of Brahman as really with and without attributes can neither be logically justified nor bring about a rational unity among all other conceptions. The examples cited by the Master presuppose this conception about the Ultimate Reality. As this conception is found to be not logically tenable, the examples are deprived of their rational basis. Thus the Master's effort by means of examples to account for what he regarded as apparent differences of opinions among different systems of Philosophy and Religion is futile.

The illustration of 'water' is not to the point. In this case different names are associated with the same conception about the same thing, but otherwise is the case with regard to Ultimate Truth. It is evident that the differences among the different systems do not consist merely in giving different linguistic expressions to the identical conception about the ultimate Reality (as in the case of water), because their conceptions about it fundamentally differ from one another. The analogy of blind men's experience of the different features of the same elephant is also inapplicable. The different systems of the Philosophy of Religion cannot be logically persuaded to admit that their respective conceptions represent only different features or aspects of the Absolute Reality. Moreover, this analogy is based on the assumption that the Ultimate Reality has, like the elephant, different features

or aspects. But such an assumption is not only fundamentally contradictory to the conception of Reality held by some other schools, but it cannot, as has been shown in course of its critical examination, be logically established to the satisfaction of all classes of thinkers. The example of chameleon also is inappropriate. It is based on the hypothesis that the Absolute Reality or Brahman does actually assume different forms and reveal Himself in different characters to different truth-seekers. But such a hypothesis cannot be verified and proved. This illustration also implies that either the Reality has no definite ultimate or essential character, or His ultimate or essential character is unknown or unknowable or indefinable, though His nature and capacity of assuming different forms is definitely asserted. This position also can neither stand logical tests nor be acceptable to those schools of thought, that earnestly aspire after philosophically establishing the ultimate nature of Reality.

The example of the woman is not better suited to the point at issue. The woman is characterised differently in relation to different persons. Here the question is raised, whether the woman has any essential nature of her own or the relative attributes only constitute her nature, and also whether, if she has any nature of her own, it can be ascertained. It is the existence and the essential character of the Ultimate Reality, that are sought to be established in every Philosophy of Religion. In this case Brahman's existence is assumed, His unity is taken for granted, whether He has any character of His own remains unascertainable, the different systems of Philosophy are condemned as being content with the establishment of only relative attributes and partial aspects of His nature. How such a view can satisfy the demand of the Philosophy of Religion and

establish the essential unity of all systems, it is difficult to understand.

The implication of his example of the Salt-puppet and Salt-ocean, if carried to its logical conclusion, would mean that the ultimate end of the quest of the Absolute must be the complete loss of the individuality of the finite self and no acquaintance with the nature of the Absolute. Philosophically this view implies Agnosticism and the impossibility of the determination of the nature of the Ultimate Reality by the human understanding though at the same time it implies the essential non-difference of the finite self from that Reality. This is also a doctrine, subject to the criticism of all philosophical systems, that seek to form a definite idea about the Ultimate Reality. Moreover, if this view is adhered to, whatever has been spoken and taught about the Ultimate Reality must be regarded as having only relative values, but no ultimate logical value. Hence this fundamental conception of Brahman as being with as well as without attributes and powers must also be regarded as relative and having no ultimate validity. A seeker after the Ultimate Truth, which is the subject-matter of the Philosophy of Religion may not therefore be satisfied with this conception.*

* It has to be noted that by an example or analogy alone, no conclusion can be established Here what is to be proved by an undeniable method of valid knowledge is already taken for granted. The examples cited refer to things which are known by perception ; but the ultimate deduction which is sought to be made is with regard to a supposed Reality which cannot be an object of sense-perception Its very existence has to be proved by inference, if possible, or by some other valid method of knowledge. The knowledge of the ultimate object of pursuit being necessarily non-perceptual, it must stand on some infallible ground, obtainable in the domain of direct experience, on the strength of which the existence and the nature of

We have examined the principal doctrines of the great spiritual Master of the modern age from the logical and philosophical point of view. We found that they cannot supply a rational basis for the harmonisation of all religio-philosophical views. We have now to proceed to the

the object can be rationally demonstrated. But no such ground is offered in the examples cited. Besides, an example is no reason; it can never directly prove anything. The cause-effect-relation present in the example is generally granted; but from this to conclude that the same applies to the Ultimate Reality is not allowable, because there is neither any link between the two, nor is there any proof to demonstrate that there are similar causal relations in both the cases. The example which is taken from valid perceptual experience cannot be said to be similar in essential respects to what transcends experience. Suppose one cites the example of a seed developing into a big tree. The idea of such development cannot on the strength of such an example be applied to the ultimate cause of the universe. If the analogy be accepted, then the ultimate Ground of the universe must also be regarded as having a material form, capable of changing and losing itself into the series of effects. This is of course not accepted. According to this analogy it may be concluded that the said Reality is no more, because we find that when a seed turns into a tree it does not retain its separate existence. But this is not accepted. If analogy is intended to mean only the subtlety of the material cause, then also it cannot be determined that from the Reality, as conceived by the person who cites the example, the world has come out. It cannot also be ascertained whether that subtlest Entity is an atom (having the least measure or measureless; uniform or of various kinds) or Energy (unmanifest) or Brahman (as real material cause or substratum only) or anything else, and it is plain that these conclusions are mutually contradictory Moreover, on the strength of an example some thing or attribute or phenomenon or action may be supposed, but so long as a conclusive proof is not adduced in favour of it, it can never be ascertained. So an example may be useful to eliminate the notion of improbability, but it can never conclusively establish a conclusion. Without a definite source of valid knowledge, no conclusion can, by an example alone, be rationally established, because a counter-example leading to an opposite conclusion is as well possible Without putting forth reason, by an example alone nothing can be established or negated, nor the counter-example be checked Besides, the existence of what is asserted by an allegory may be experienced afterwards, or it may be experienced as non-existent though it has existence, or it may be non-existent altogether Hence by allegory alone nothing can gain ground.

examination of the assertion that these doctrines are the embodiments of the truths realised or intuited by the Master in course of his trances, when he came face to face with the truths.

Samādhi and its stages described.

There can only be two kinds of *Samādhi*—one with and the other without thought and there cannot be a third one. In other words, if we look to the nature of mind we must accept that in one stage mind acts in a subtle way and in another it becomes actionless ; and there cannot be a third mode in which mind will remain in *Samādhi*. It is psychologically impossible. Since it is absolutely impossible for the mind to attain to a third stage no one can attain to *Samādhi* of any other kind.

Now let us discuss in detail the gradual steps through which *Samādhi* is attained. It is attained generally by the steady and continuous practice of restraining the organs, keeping the mind focussed and by meditation. In the first stage (प्रत्याहार) there is the effort of mere turning away of the sense-organs from objects. In the second stage (धारणा), the mind of the person, whose sense-organs have turned away from objects, is persistently applied to a particular object of contemplation. Afterwards there are three more stages namely (1) meditation (ध्यान), (2) trance which is the means to the forthcoming one (साधनसमाधि), and (3) trance which is attained through that means (साध्यसमाधि). The difference of these three stages should be known as due to greater or less intensity of the ripeness of meditation.

When the mind withheld from various objects is concentrated on one desired object and does not fly to other objects, and the sense-organs do not become unsteady by

being affected by objects, that state is called the focussing of consciousness or a steady abstraction of mind. The difference between the ordinary state of waking and this state is that in the ordinary state, after one wave, another of a different kind rises in mind, but in this state the waves are of the same kind. In this state of focussing (धारणा), though there is a flow of fickle thoughts, still they are of a uniform nature, and the thought of the next moment is the same as the previous one. By the practice of such focussing, the mind attains to the state of meditation (ध्यान). The difference of the states of focussing and meditation is that at the time of the former the succession of thoughts is of uniform nature, but at the time of meditation the succession of thoughts is not known, but the endurance of a single thought is experienced. In other words, in focussing, the flow of similar ideas is felt, but in a closely attentive state it is experienced that a single thought is occupying the field of consciousness. In focussing, thoughts flow on in a broken line in a successive order, but in the state of meditation the break is not so felt, and the thoughts flow like a continuous stream. Here the flow of a thought is unmixed with any different thought. It is not directed towards any object which is not desired or pointed at, but is concentrated only on the object desired. Here the contemplation of the object is uninterrupted or continuous. When meditation becomes mature, the mind attains to *Samādhi* where very subtle thought persists. In the state of meditation, the distinction of the one who meditates, the act of meditation and the object meditated upon persists, but in the aforesaid Samādhi-state that distinction remains indistinct. What happens is this: in meditation mind functions in three ways. In one part it is the meditator, in another part it is the meditation, in still another part it is the object upon which meditation is applied. In trance

with thought meditation loses its aspects and becomes manifested as the meditated object. We may watch four successive stages in deep meditation. At the first stage, the aspirant retains the remembrance that "at present my mind is occupied with this object", which is designated by some word. At the second stage, there is no such remembrance, and the mind at this stage becomes coloured by the object which appears to be very subtle. In the next stage, the feeling of the slight and subtle difference experienced in the second stage is gone, and the object of meditation appears as if non-different from our knowledge. In the fourth stage it appears as if the object alone flashes. By the practice of *Samādhi* with thought another state is acquired which is without any thought. There is no other state of mind above or beyond this ; so no higher state can be reached, but by practice merely the time of the enduring of this state may be lengthened.

Samādhi-Experience Described.

Those who practise Samàdhi realise the following, viz., at first the mind becomes fickle, thinking about outside objects and there is imagination also; afterwards the reference to outside objects is gone and only the internal current of impressions is felt. In other words, in the first stage though there is the rise of fancies, still the mind is more strongly occupied with the reference to extra-mental objects which also are not other than mental. In the next stage, this objective reference is not so vivid and the mind is more occupied with fancies. Afterwards those disturbances subside and a voidness is felt; afterwards the subtle enjoyment of that void lapses and at the rise of subtle, concentrated thoughts different realisations occur in accordance with the thoughts. After concentration, there comes a state where

the experience of non-vivid ego, non-vivid realisation and the vivid realised object felt in the preceding state is no more. In the earlier stages the person who practises concentration has to make strong efforts to suppress the awakened impressions. After some success he feels joy, and some fancies mixed with reflection also make their appearance in this state. When the mind becomes more concentrated, these fancies and reflections are not felt. Afterwards the fickle enjoyment of joy also is lost and the calmness of beatitude is felt. Afterwards this feeling of beatitude also lapses. This is all that is spoken of as *Samādhi* and nothing more and nothing less is invariably experienced in this practice of *Samādhi.*

The objective truth unascertainable through trance with thought.

Now about *Samādhi* with thought. Such a *Samādhi* can never beget the aforesaid conclusion (viz., every sectarian *Sādhanā* leads to the same goal) because in this state there is no experience of the different paths and their pointing towards or reaching the same goal. In that state the mind becomes concentrated merely on the object of meditation. According to the difference of tastes of different aspirants, there is the difference of meditated objects and so the intuitions of that state are of a varied nature. In that state the consciousness of objects other than the one meditated does not arise in the mind. That about which the concentration is practised becomes intuited and nothing else. Though "intuition claims to give immediate awareness," this awareness does not refer to any independent and constant Truth, but to concepts which change at each intuition. Besides, an 'immediacy' does not legislate about what is beyond itself either to deny it or to affirm it.

It is sometimes held that when the mind is free from impurities, arising from worldly desires and passions and also free from all sorts of restlessness, it comes face to face with many subtle truths, which the impure minds cannot reach by sense-perception or inference. But the question of impurities can arise here only in so far as they can stand in the way of concentration. If in spite of the impurities due to worldly desires present in the mind, the mind can practise concentration, the impurities cannot affect the intuitions that may arise from it. These intuitions really mean the direct experience of the objects upon which the mind was concentrated. Different men concentrating their attention on different objects and practising meditation on them will have different intuitions. Such intuitions, therefore, can be no tests of truth At certain stages of the practice of meditation, many deep-seated impressions, present in the sub-conscious state of the mind, rise to the surface of consciousness and appear as directly experienced. These experiences differ according to the differences of the latent impressions of different '*Sādhakas*' (those who practise meditation). These also therefore can be no criteria of truth. When the '*Sādhaka*', by means of still more strenuous practice, rises above these stages, his mind becomes practically identified with the original object of his meditation and at that state it is this object that completely occupies his mind and becomes the only object of his intuition. If different *Sādhakas* accept different ideas as the objects of their meditation, their realisations also will accordingly be different. Hence even the realisations of the highest state of trance with thought cannot be accepted as revealing the true nature of the ultimate Reality. Moreover, if the intuition of that meditated object is taken as the goal, then the identity of the goal of all practices will not be established. In the advanced state of deep meditation (with

thought), the individual object which is meditated upon does not vanish, but there remains subtle and vivid presentation. Thus a person who meditates upon different objects at different times cannot realise them simultaneously nor is the realisation obtained through one course of meditation recollected at the time of the recollection obtained through a different course of meditation. So he cannot intuit similarity or oneness of the ultimate result of all systems of spiritual discipline.

The ultimate intuitions from different forms of meditation differ.

Now let us show that as a result of different sectarian *Sādhanās* one cannot attain to the same form of intuition in *Samādhi* with thought. Those who consider God as having an eternal form or as formless having the capacity of taking forms at His will, think on God's form which they are taught to believe in, and at the time of the trance with thought they visualise their concept and intuit it. After waking from that state, the pre-conceived notion about God's form and their realisation of those forms get hold of their minds. Those who do not believe in God and at the same time meditate on some form or other, realise that form at that trance. Those who believe in God, but meditate on forms which they do not take as God's, realise their desired forms in the state of the concentration of mind. There are others who consider God as ever-formless and never capable of having forms ; they think on God's attributes and not on forms. They also look upon God as separate from individual living beings. In meditation they concentrate attention upon their idea of God as having attributes. They try to retain their sense of individuality up to the end. So the idea arises in their minds that they realise God as

different from themselves. After awakening from that state, they stick to the same conclusion. Others who give more thought to the idea of the self as a mere witness (egoless), or that of the self as having egohood, and along with this preserve the remembrance of not-self in general realise the self as distinct or distinguished from the not-self. After awakening from *Samādhi* they hold to their doctrine. There are others who believe in a non-dual consciousness called Brahman. In the concentrated state, the things and the ego which are perceived subtly are intuited by them as belonging to one single existence. In this meditation there is no effort to intensify attention upon the said things which well up into the field of consciousness and it is also felt that the person having that meditative state has no control over such a flash of objects; nevertheless there is will or effort to realise the one non-dual existence. Thus there is difference of the perception of the things in that stage from that of the forms realised by those who intensify their attention to intuit them. Now, among the adherents of Brahman some cherish the idea that Brahman with all conscious and unconscious beings as the manifestations of Its Energy or attributes is the Reality, and others regard Brahman as really attributeless, those manifestations or qualifications being to them illusory. Both these classes of *Sādhakas* have the same realisation. Though owing to the persistence of the subtle ego, the realisation of both cannot but be of the same type, still after awakening it is interpreted in accordance with their different metaphysical preconceptions. One sect takes other things as innate in the Reality, another takes them as attributes distinct from though involved in it; whereas those who regard consciousness as attributeless deem it impossible for objects like the ego and the material world to remain in the self-luminous consciousness. So after awakening, through the exercise of the faculty of discriminatiou, the third sect

takes the said intuition as that of attributeless Reality, though not felt directly in that nature at the time of meditation. Thus we find that due to difference of conceptions, there are different realisations among the followers of different religious sects. Thus religious experience neither is nor can be, by itself and separated from the subject, regarded as having inevitable objective reference; hence the subject gives it an objective import by means of the belief which he inserts in it. So it is false to suppose that different *Sādhanā* of different religious sects lead to the same intuition in *Samādhi* with thought.

Thus from the above analysis of the nature of intuitions in trance with thought it will be evident that the assertion that all the religious systems lead ultimately to the realisation of the same truth cannot be maintained.

Moreover, the great historical religions of the world are generally believed to be based on the spiritual realisations of their illustrious founders. Had the highest spiritual intuitions of these great religious teachers been the same, the differences with regard to the conception of ultimate Reality taught by them could in no way be accounted for. The earnest truth-seekers belonging to the different sects are also found to give expression to their final realisations in different forms. All these evidences make it difficult to believe that the ultimate spiritual intuitions of the men who are regarded as having reached the highest end of religious discipline are substantially the same. Hence the assertion that all religious systems are only different paths to reach the same goal cannot be substantiated either by the analysis of the nature of *Samādhi* or by historical evidence.

Synthesis unrealisable in trance without Thought.

Now let us discuss *Samādhi* without thought. In this stage no realisation is possible, for realisation implies thought, and in the absence of thought nothing can be intuited. At the stage where intuitions occur, there lingers the feeling of the ego and due to that there is the idea of the qualified and its qualification, and hence such a state cannot be called *Samādhi* without thought. The experiences that by having practised this *Sādhanā* I have reached the state of *Samādhi* without thought and am now realising the truth of it cannot be attained in the state of *Samādhi* without thought. Hence the nature of the goal and the path leading to the goal cannot be realised by the Samadhi-intuition. It is for this reason that persons holding different views about paths and goals retain their familiar notions even after their awakening from the Samādhi-state.

Master's conclusions examined in the light of the analysis of Samādhi.

Now let us further examine the statement that the Master discovered the truth in *Samādhi* (trance) that all sectarian *Sādhanā* lead to the same goal. The discovery can possibly be supposed to be made either in trance with thought or in trance without thought or in some intermediate stage. Of these, the first alternative must be abandoned. There the realised objects are various according to different thoughts. As the object intuited is not constant, but shifting at every interval, it should not be called the goal. The second alternative cannot be accepted, because in that case the person will shake off the trance without thought.

Now about the third alternative. Here we have to consider what is meant by this intermediate state. It may mean either (a) the last stage (final point) of trance with thought, or (b) the initial point of trance without thought, or (c) that which connects both the points i.e., the end of the trance with thought and the beginning of the trance without thought. Of these, (a) the first cannot give the experience, because there occur different experiences according to the different objects adopted for meditation and so they cannot be ascertained as the goal. (b) The second alternative also cannot serve the purpose. In order to ascertain the goal, the ego should be there, but this is not possible in trance without thought. (c) The third alternative cannot be reasonably supposed to supply this intuition, because such a point of transition cannot be marked. Those who practise *Samādhi* know it well that the moment between two types of *Samādhi* cannot be marked; otherwise there can be no trance without thought. To give a familiar example, the point of transition between dream and dreamless sleep cannot be marked; otherwise this would amount to the loss of dreamless sleep. After waking from that Samādhi-state one remembers that his mental state was going to become subtle and more subtle and afterwards became non-vivid and for some time there was no feeling of any state and that now he is awake In order to know the link, the ego should remain in both the end of the one and the beginning of the other; but in trance without thought there is no ego ; so the alleged link cannot be ascertained. As the ego is exhausted in the trance with thought and cannot go further, it cannot know the link.

To explain: in order to know that a thing has reached some goal, it is necessary to intuit at a time three things,

namely, the thing, its pointing towards the goal and its reaching the extremity. Such being the case, the ego should continue to intuit these three and to ascertain their relation. But as the ego cannot remain in trance without thought and as the last stage of trance with thought together with the beginning of trance without thought cannot be marked, there cannot be the intuition of the said three. Nor can it be supposed that a consciousness higher than the ego will know it. Even granting such a consciousness, we submit that it cannot reveal these without the help of the ego and as that consciousness is taken to be egoless and immutable, it cannot of itself have these notions. Thus the conclusion that all *Sādhanās* lead to the same goal can never be the object of realisation in *Samādhi*.

The arguments in defence of the Master's position.

The advocates of the position we are examining here may contend as follows. Thay may observe that it is not asserted that either in *Samādhi* with thought or in *Samādhi* without thought there is any comparison of the goals or the paths of different religions. What really happens is this. The earnest truth-seekers of every *bona fide* religious system begin their meditation with some conception of the ultimate Reality. This conception is necessarily clothed in some names and forms. The forms may be gross or subtle, physical or mental, according to the instructions received by them and the capacities of their minds to comprehend them. In the earlier stages of *Sādhanā*, the names and forms and relative attributes which constitute their conception of the Truth remain in the forefront and they fail to dissociate the substance of Truth

from its clothings. These clothings of Truth being different in different systems, the followers of different systems cannot realise the identity of the Substance of Truth. When any sincere and steady *Sādhaka* pursues a systematic course of spiritual discipline in accordance with the method of his own system, his mind gradually becomes subtler and more transparent, its capacity for the penetration into and comprehension of the nature of Truth increases, the substance of Truth becomes more and more dissociated from the garb of names, forms and relative attributes. At the highest stages of trance with thought his mind becomes subtle and pure enough to realise the Truth in its essential character free from the garbs. When his mind comes down from that plane to the lower planes, it retains the memory of the realisation, but being again under the influence of previous impressions and imperfections, it thinks of that Truth in terms of and in association with those previously learnt names, forms and attributes. The difference that arises in the character of his thought as a result of his realisation lies in this that these garbs of Truth do not remain predominant and they are understood as mere garbs. But as this particular *Sādhaka* is acquainted only with his own system of discipline and the nature of Truth as realised through that system, he naturally thinks that Truth, which he has realised and which has fulfilled his spiritual demands, can be realised only through that particular system. Being ignorant of the other systems of discipline and the nature of the realisation attainable through any of them, it does not become possible for him to compare in thought the goals of the different systems of discipline. Hence it is natural for him to think of his own system as perfect and other systems as imperfect.

But the case is different with the Master. He had taken up one by one the courses of discipline instructed in the scriptures of the principal *bona fide* religious systems and practised meditation in accordance with each of them. At the time of practising any particular system, he adopted the names, forms and relative attributes, which were associated with the conception of Truth in that system. He rose step by step to the higher and higher stages of meditation along each path though on account of his extraordinary power of concentration he completed each course within an unexpectedly short period. On coming down from the highest stage of realisation obtained through each system, he of course retained the memory of the nature of Truth, as he then realised, dissociated from the names, forms and attributes which each system associated with it. As a result of his experience of the pure nature of Truth attainable through each system, he had, in the plane of discriminating thought, the extraordinary opportunity of drawing a comparison among the goals of these systems. It is in this way that he could come to the conclusion that Truth, free from the particular names, forms and attributes that different systems associate with its nature, is the same, and that the course of spiritual discipline enjoined by each system is meant to enable particular minds to take the help of those garbs and gradually to transcend them for the realisation of the same pure Truth. Thus the doctrine that all systems of religion are particular paths to the same ultimate goal is the result not merely of Samādhi-intuition, but of mature reflection and judgment, based upon the realisation of the goal through particular courses of discipline in accordance with a great many systems of religion.

The Critical Examination of the Arguments.

Now, let us examine this argument adduced by the exponents of this doctrine in defence of the position of the Master. The entire argument is based on the assumptions that the same Truth is realisable in the higher stages of trance with thought reached by the systematic pursuit of all the various courses of religious discipline and that the exact character of the realisations obtained through different methods can be remembered and compared by dicriminating intelligence.

With regard to the first assumption, our first question is,—is the object of the realisation attained through any particular method absolutely without any form or attribute or has it some sort of form or attribute ? If it is absolutely without any form or attribute, nothing can be predicated of it and without any kind of predication it cannot be said to be known and what is not known cannot possibly be remembered. The same question, which is connected with the first, is—are the ego and the mind present at the time of this realisation or not ? If they are absolutely absent, there can be no actual realisation. Without the subject and the instrument of realisation, no object can appear and the nature of an object, even if present, cannot be apprehended. In the complete absence of the subject-object-relation, no knowledge is possible, as in the case of trance without thought. Hence it must be admitted that the ego with the mind is present in the state of trance with thought, though in a pure and subtler form. Therefore it must also be admitted that what is called Truth can at this state appear to the ego only as related to the ego and the mind.

Now since the ego and the mind cannot conceive or realise the nature of any entity except as somewhat qualified

i.e., as having some predicate, what is called Truth, in order to be the object of actual realisation to the ego and the mind, must have some qualification, i.e., some form or attribute. Here another question arises,—can the ego and the mind exist and function absolutely without any determination? When the ego and the mind are deprived of all determining specific characteristics, they lose their individuality and pass into the unmanifested and functionless state, and no realisation is possible in that state. Hence it must be admitted that at the time of realisation, the ego must have an angle of vision and the mind must have some impression influencing its mode of receiving what appears to it. The outlook of the ego and the mind at each state of spiritual progress must again be the product of the preceding stage, though with deeper concentration and more earnest attempt to visualise what they accepted as the idea. Consequently the influence of the conception of the ideal, with which and for the realisation of which the individual begins his *Sādhanā* never forsakes his ego and mind, until the state of trance without thought is attained. Therefore the realisations of the state of trance with thought cannot but be influenced and coloured by the *Sādhaka's* initial conception of Truth. Hence it is unpsychological to suppose that the nature of the truth as realised through *Sādhanā* actuated by one kind of conception should be identically the same as that realised through *Sādhanā* actuated by an opposite kind of conception.

Thus the fundamental assumption underlying the argument of the exponent of the unity of the goal of all religions, when critically examined, cannot be substantiated.

Moreover, even, if at any stage of the spiritual advancement of an individual belonging to a particular sect, a concept, alike in nature to that which is regarded as

the highest ideal of Truth by another rival sect, appears on the surface of the mind, produces a deep impression upon it and assumes the form of realisation, he will, as soon as he regains the power of reflecting upon it, make efforts to transcend it and realise his own ideal. So long as the realisation does not correspond with the ideal conceived in the beginning, the *Sādhaka* is not satisfied. The ideal may however be changed many times in the life of a spiritual aspirant.* But the formation or the change of ideal is a matter of discriminating intelligence. Through meditation the ideal accepted by intelligence is realised, but the nature of the ideal is not changed. As the ideals are formed in accordance with the different conceptions of Reality of the different religious systems, the realisations also necessarily differ.

*Master's view namely Dualism, qualified non-dualism and pure non-dualism are progressive stages of *Sādhanā* having pure Non-dualism as their goal is not tenable. Some one might have begun as well as ended in that way his spiritual career But, for this, the same cannot be cited as a rule, because we find instances to contradict the above assertion The acceptance of a particular course of *Sādhanā* depends upon education and environment which are not uniform To be clear, one may begin with Non-dualism and end through qualified Non-dualism in Dualism One may begin with qualified Non-Dualism and end through Non-dualism in Dualism. One may begin with Dualism and end through Non-dualism in qualified Non-dualism Or one may stick to one and only one of those conceptions and struggle hard to reach the alleged goal and end his career with a realisation of that one conception, be it Dualism, qualified Non-dualism or Non-dualism. Moreover, it is found that philosophers assert that their own system is absolutely logical and every philosopher is in the habit of refuting all other systems, though as a matter of fact his own system also is refuted by the advocates of other systems. As the heart cannot be separated from the head, faithful and sincere students having leaning towards *Sādhanā* are found to practise according to metaphysical conclusions

But the comparative study of the conceptions of Reality of the different systems has shown that in many of the conceptions there are some points of agreement and some points of difference. While reflecting upon them, some may attach greater importance to the points of difference, and some others may assume an attitude of indifference to the points of difference, and regard the points of agreement as of all-absorbing importance. This is greatly due to the temperamental difference of the thinkers.

The Master might have formed the ideal of unity in the plane of discriminating intelligence, and after descending from the plane of meditation and realisation, he might have ignored the differentiating elements of the objects of realisation and emphasised the elements of agreement. This cannot be construed as the actual realisation of the unity of the goal of all paths in the state of trance.

As the objects of realisation through all paths cannot be accepted to be the same, the argument that they are afterwards remembered and found to be the same by comparison becomes baseless. Hence whether there can be

they accept. So *Sādhanā* is a question of appeal to the head and the heart of varying types; it does not refer to stages in spiritual expression and growth Here it should be remembered that there cannot be any intrinsic objective gradation either in trance with thought or without it Thus one sectarian *Sādhanā* can never be labelled as "the stepping stone to the other," either philosophically or intuitively. Besides, one may not hold to the above three doctrines and may accept Atheism or Scepticism or Agnosticism or Nihilism or Negativism, but still he may continue to practise *Sādhanā*. Over and above, it is difficult to understand how the above view can be consistent with the theory of Harmony and with the saying that "what is without attribute is with attribute."

one ultimate goal for all religions depends upon whether there can be one conception of ultimate Reality rationally acceptable to all men, and this is a matter for philosophy to ascertain by logical arguments.

The Unity of goal cannot be established by inference

Now let ue see if the conclusion about the unity of goal can be got at through inference after waking from the state of trance without thought. If the conclusion is said to be inferential, then it cannot be called the intuition of any Master. Moreover, as the said state cannot be an object of knowledge, it is not possible to infer it as having the property of being the goal. We can know through inference or implication that there mind was actionless, but this determination is of no avail here. To ascertain that we reach the goal, we should have the ascertainment of the nature of Truth there. This ascertainment being absent at that stage the alleged inference is based on the pre-conceived notions about Truth; and as these are various, the conceptions of the goal must be different. Thus although the trance without thought may be established by inference or implication, still we cannot determine the nature of the goal and its attainment.

Now we show how, due to difference in metaphysical conclusions, there are different inferences with regard to the attainment of goal in trance without thought. Those, who advocate the theory of non-dual attributeless Reality, think that in *Samādhi* without thought the mind assumes the nature of Reality; that is, in that state the mind modifies itself into the form of the Reality (तदाकारकारित). Some others do not accept an attributeless Reality, but

count Reality as qualified non-dual. According to them, *Samādhi* without thought has for its content the non-dual Reality possessing attributes (निर्विकल्पमपि सविषयविषयमेव). Those who do not recognise non-dual Reality have different ideas about that state. Some think that in that state the self becomes mere witness; that is, the self which is the witness of intelligence remains even in *Samādhi* as of the nature of consciousness, but owing to the absence of objects to be seen, namely modifications, it does not see. Some do not believe in such a witness-consciousness. According to them, in the state of *Samādhi* the self, because of the absence of materials, does not know any object, as in the cases of swoon and dreamless sleep Hence it remains unconscious and there is the absence of knowledge in general. Others do not acknowledge non-dual Reality with or without attribute, neither do they admit the witness-self, nor the self with the attribute of knowledge. According to them intelligence is momentary, and there is no permanent self underlying it. In the state of *Samādhi* without thought, owing to the lack of objects, its objective determination is no more; hence at that stage intelligence does not operate and becomes lost, as is the case with a lamp whose wick is burnt out.

Thus we find that inference about the alleged synthesis is not possible, if we consider the grounds of different metaphysical conclusions.

To sum up: the doctrine of the unity of the goal of all religions is found to be incapable of being proved either on the basis of direct realisation, or on the strength of remembrance and comparison of Samādhi-intuitions, or on any ground of reasoned inference.

The trance without thought cannot be the goal.

Trance without thought is a state of mind. Mind becomes suppressed (निरुद्ध) there, but is not lost altogether. Without any state, mind cannot exist. If the mind is destroyed, it would not produce impressions (संस्कार). Destruction is negation, it is without characteristics or difference, so it cannot be the producer of impression. But the said suppression (trance without thought) produces an impression. Without the recognition of an increase in the impressions, any other regulative cause of the gradual increase in the time of suppression depending upon an increase in the strength of practice cannot be found. Because the said impression of suppression is observed to be stronger and also because suppression is experienced to disappear, its impression has to be recognised. The existence of impression caused by the suppressed mind is inferred from the knowledge, at the waking state, of the period of time during which suppression endured. According to the force of practice, Samādhi-state becomes more or less abiding. If not practised long or if the flow of opposite practice predominates, then it requires prolonged practice to get back the original state of *Samādhi*. So it is not sound to conclude that this inconstant and changing mental state is the final and highest goal. It has just been shown that trance without thought is a state of mind. Because the modifications which rise in mind are the characteristics of mind, the state of their suppression also is a characteristic of mind.

Moreover, we experience sometimes a thoughtless state in excessive joy and sorrow, and sometimes by taking intoxicating drugs also such a state is produced. But it cannot be believed that the person in such a state of abnormality achieves the goal.

No Truth ascertainable in *Samādhi* without thought

When meditation which is of the nature of mental modification is not apprehended, there can be no flash of any object whatsoever. So in the suppressed state of mind, there is no experience of any description, but like the state of swoon it is bereft of any knowledge of Truth or of anything else. So that state cannot be called the state of the realisation of Truth. *Samādhi* without thought helps us, not to gain any knowledge about the Truth, nor is our knowledge increased by it. Without first ascertaining the nature of Truth, Reality cannot be ascertained by the experience of *Samādhi*, or by different interpretations of that experience. In order to establish that there can be the ascertainment of Truth by the attainment of *Samādhi* without thought, either it has to be proved that in that state of mind the nature of Truth becomes actually discriminated, and that the nature of Truth experienced in that state can be the object of remembrance in the waking state. But both are inconceivable. In the state of *Samādhi* without thought, there is no capacity to experience, and after waking that suppressed state does not remain, and no remembrance of any experience of that state is possible. What happens is merely this, that when the Samādhi-state is gone and the waking state comes, attempts are made to recollect what was gained in the Samādhi-state, and in the absence of the possibility of recollecting or even inferring it, different guesses are made about Truth, according to the difference of education and inclination, and these are supposed to be Samādhi-intuition. Hence none of these conclusions can be maintained as founded on Samādhi-intuition.

Non-dual Reality Unrealisable.

Now a few words about the intuition of the alleged attributeless non-dual Reality. In the perception produced in deep meditation, the subtle manifestation of difference remains. So the perception during meditation with thought naturally takes for its object that which is qualified ; hence it cannot be the proof of the attributeless self-luminous consciousness. In this *Samādhi* the knower and knowledge are experienced as different from the known. This object of intuition is not of the same character for all, but varies with the thought of the person who practises *Samādhi.* Those who engage themselves in the deep thinking (भावना) of attributeless Reality, that is, those who fancy one boundless homogeneous self-luminous entity and by deepening of thought try to be one with it, realise in the state of this *Samādhi* that their existence and the existence of the world are not different from the one existence. Here the individual and the world — the subject and its object — appear as of the same uniform existence, and though there is the experience of difference, these differences are non-separate from the one homogeneous existence. We have, so to say, the subtle perception of these things within the mind, and at the same time they are all experienced as made of one single penetrating element. But mark, the above realisation is all subjective. The different things which appear are not constant, sometimes they are more in number, sometimes less. And, there is the feeling of the ego, hence that of limitation, therefore there is no perception of the unqualified. At that stage, the knower has no connection with the outside world. So there is no perception of the pervading universal. In the mature state of meditation the aspirant becomes much engrossed in the consciousness

of the unity and takes the absence of all abrupt contrast as the elimination of all distinctions.

It is said that the different intuitions are not merely the products of imagination or thought, but the different manifestations of the same Reality to different spiritual aspirants according to their culture and development. This is explained by reference to the example of the chameleon. Just as a chameleon sometimes manifests itself as red, sometimes as green and sometimes as black, so the one identical non-dual Truth manifests Itself as many, and thus in *Samādhi* the various realisations refer to the aspects or forms of the One. But this is not reasonable. Here the chameleon has an independent existence, but in the present case no such Truth has been proved. It cannot be proved through intuition. Intuition can never be the guarantee that the whole Reality is of the same nature as the contemplative mind thinks it to be. Intuition can have no general evidential force. Psychological certainty is not the infallible guide to objective validity. It has been shown that the said Truth cannot be proved through logic. Supposing that the One is proved through reasoning, it can never be suggested that that independent Entity becomes the object of intuitive perceptions. Such being the case the notion, namely that the nature of the Truth is one and its manifestations are many, is not the result of Samādhi-intuition, but it may be born of assumptions pre-conceived or acquired afterwards. Moreover, the assertion that a pure mind comes face to face with Reality presupposes the nature of Reality, which is not yet established. Since the objective existence of what is experienced at the time of *Samādhi* is not convincingly proved either by intuition itself or by rational argument or by any other means, the analogy of the chameleon does not stand. There is thus

no sufficient ground to regard the Samādhi-intuition as anything more than the objectification of subjective ideas.

Thus what is called " seeing things in the whole " is merely a subjective notion acquired through the habit of projecting our minds in that form. The imagination at that time constructs a form of formlessness—a vast shoreless ocean, an infinite expanse of water,—and the mind which supposes that it meditates on the whole really visualises some such symbol. As the feeling of that fancied object has become intense in *Samādhi* and there is no rise of any other feeling to oppose it, we realise our mental modification as the alleged whole. So intuition cannot really have any objective reference to "the indivisible whole." But we mistake an imagination which is purely subjective, as " the indivisible whole ". Here thought-processes are misrepresented and thought-events are mistaken as world-events; what is a psychological report (and a true one) is taken as a metaphysical statement (and a false one). Owing to this confusion or misinterpretation, the mystic intuitions which are nothing but personal habitual hallucinations pass for realisation of Reality. Besides, where there is "conscious or affective identity between that which knows and that which is known," there must remain egoistic feeling to determine that there is such identity and that egoistic feeling should be subtle and refer to both the knower and the known. So in order to assert " the state of common self-existence in which the knower and the known are one through knowledge," you must recognise the subtle ego; otherwise to call it 'common' is meaningless. Where there is no knowledge of difference, there cannot be the feeling of commonness. So it comes to this that in such intuitional knowledge there is the subtle feeling of ego and the idea of difference which is contradictory to the

nature of non-duality; hence such intuition cannot have for its content the intrinsic nature of non-dual Reality.

Now about *Samādhi* without thought. In this state there is no manifestation of anything, so like dreamless sleep nothing is perceived here.

Question :—Does intelligence (बुद्धि) exist in this trance or not ?

Answer :—If the knowledge of the person just awakened from the trance is inference, then there is no necessity to recognise intelligence there. If that knowledge is remembrance, then intelligence should be recognised.

Advocate :—If intelligence is granted, then what harm is there to conclude that in that trance, the unqualified Reality alone is known ?

Critic :—Here it is to be considered how the said Reality has been ascertained. Is it determined through logic or through Samādhi-intuition ? The first cannot be convincing, because it has been found that there are divergent and mutually contradictory theories and that they are all defective. The said Reality cannot be ascertained in trance with thought. It cannot also be ascertained in trance without thought, otherwise that state will be no more. To ascertain the nature of an object is not the function of indeterminate knowledge. So it cannot " reveal the inscrutable mystery of silence."

Thus the ascertainment of Reality is not attained through trance. What happens is that at the time of awakening from trance without thought,the previous notion about Reality, the notion which has been acquired by the person through discrimination or belief, is aroused and it is supposed that that trance referred to such Reality. Hence

it comes to this that if the said knowledge is taken as remembrance, then it should be admitted that in trance without thought intelligence becomes so subtle and suppressed that it cannot determine the nature of Reality. Thus it is found that as logic in favour of Reality is defective and as intuition fails to determine the nature of Reality, the advocate cannot be allowed to assume that trance without thought refers to such a Reality and to suppose that in that state the individual living beings ('*Jiva*') becomes as if one with it. Moreover, the facts observed contradict the conclusion that Truth is realised in *Samādhi*. If there is perception of Reality everyone should have the same story to tell about the nature of Reality at least immediately after awaking from that state. There should then be no reason for their giving different versions at that time. In that case all who would arise from that state should have remembrance of the same uniform nature, there would be no likelihood of different opinions. But it is well-known that there are different opinions on the point. Though such awakening and suppression are recognised by all philosophers, they hold most divergent opinions about the nature of Reality. Thus we conclude that in that state there is no ascertainment of Truth.

Hence the assertion that the knowledge of the attributeless Reality is or can be attained by *Samādhi* cannot be regarded as consistent with facts.

The practical aspect of author's view of Samādhi.

If our conclusion about *Samādhi* is not accepted, then we submit we don't find any satisfactory solution of the difference of opinion about ultimate Truth among various religious sects, specially among those who attain to *Samādhi* and sincerely hold to their own sectarian conclusions. If

our conclusion is not taken to be genuine, then it should be acknowledged that some have realised Truth in *Samādhi* and others have not, or that there are different grades, higher and lower, in the realisation of Truth, or that different truth-seers realise only partial aspects of Truth, and no one the whole Tr ut

The acceptance of any of these alternatives will not be helpful to the establishment of a harmonious relationship among the different religious systems. All the religious systems claim to be founded on the highest spiritual realisations of their founders. Now, if the first of the above alternatives is accepted, then only one of the religions has to be regarded as based on the knowledge of the highest Truth, while the founders of other rival religious systems should be thought of as not having realised it and these religious systems also should be considered as of a lower order. The acceptance of the second alternative also will lead to the same conclusion. It will imply that some religions are lower than others, and that the prophets and saints of some religions are of an inferior type in comparison with those of others. The acceptance of the third alternative would lead to the conclusion that no religion is based on the realisation of the complete Truth, that none of the recognised holy men and spiritual teachers of the world attained perfect knowledge, and that being founded on partial knowledge, each religious system, if pursued steadily to the end, can help to attain only a particular aspect of Truth.

Now, if the different religious systems and their founders are judged in this way, the practical effect of such judgment is not likely to produce the desired result, viz. a spirit of harmony among them. Moreover, if the highest

truth of one religion is to be regarded as representing the ultimate nature of Reality, and among the highest truths of other religions also, a gradation of values is to be made, what should be the criterion of judgment, as to the lower and the higher and the highest knowledge of Truth? Will it be the realisation of the latest of the prophets or truth-seers? But how can it be ascertained that his realisation also is not of a lower order, that it is also not a partial view of Truth ? Thus the appeal to realisation cannot bring about a harmony of faiths, because it cannot persuade the members of any religious community to accept a lower position for their own prophet and his teachings. Consequently the final court of appeal is Reason. But by logical reasoning also we have found that no finally satisfactory conclusion with regard to the ultimate nature of Reality can be attained.

Thus our conclusion is that neither by logical reasoning nor by Samādhi-intuition can the ultimate nature of Reality be perfectly ascertained. We do not deny the validity of the intuitions as such of any of the illustrious founders of religious systems or of any individual that systematically practises deep meditation. But we assert that they are valid only as subjective spiritual experiences varying according to their preconceived ideas and objects of meditation. This accounts for the differences of intuitions of different sincere truth-seekers, and none of them need be judged as higher or lower. As there is no means of ascertaining their objective validity, there is no reason for regarding the realisations of some as the fullest knowledge of Truth and of others as partial knowledge, or the intuitions of some as leading to the goal and of others not leading to the goal. Hence there is no ground for any quarrel among the exponents of different religious views for

all of them are based on and have for their ideals unascertained and unascertainable truths.

All religions based on dogmas.

From the above discussion of *Samādhi* it is clear that the claim of realisation of Truth or reaching the goal during that state is unfounded. From the experince of a merely mental state having no reference to any objective Reality, the arrival at any conclusion about an extramental or independent Reality cannot be justified.

Besides, if a person practises to lengthen the period of sleep and to have dreamless sleep, he cannot be said to have attained to Truth during sleep. The same may be said about the *Samādhi* without thought. Here also there is no enjoyment of joy, no feeling of the world and the like. So it cannot be said that it is the attainment of the alleged goal. The difference between the two states, we feel, is this, that a person arising from sound sleep remains the same normal man as before; but on awaking from the supernormal state of *Samādhi* without thought, he becomes a changed man as it were for the time being. This is due to the fact that the Samādhi-state of mind is generally attained by a long course of conscious and voluntary struggle for suppressing the various distractions to which the mind is ordinarily subject. So an extraordinary calmness and tranquillity of mind is felt after awaking from that state of *Samādhi*. But this difference between dreamless sleep and *Samādhi* has nothing to do with the realisation of Truth or the attainment of the alleged goal.

Over and above, as there are divergent religious systems, for ascertaining whether all or some of them are

true paths to the same goal, it is necessary first of all to ascertain the nature of the goal But as we have found by logical reasoning and analysis of *Samādhi*, this can in no way be ascertained. It has already been proved that each and every notion about Reality or God, about *Sādhanā* having objective reference and about absolute liberation is incapable of being established on a rational basis. When we have found that our apprehension and remembrance cannot be explained by any theory of the self, we cannot speak about the alleged bondage of the self. When we cannot ascertain the nature of the self, it is not possible to determine its bondage. When each and every theory about causation is found to be defective, we cannot conclude that this practice will lead to any final goal, because this conclusion is based on the assumption of the causal law. Besides, when *Law of Karma* has been refuted, the conclusion, namely, this or that action will invariably result in the attainment of this or that ideal, cannot be reached. Thus, when what is to be attained cannot be determined, when the nature of the person who is to attain cannot be ascertained and when the means adopted with the hope of attainment cannot be said to bring forth the desired result as its effect, the beliefs that there are different paths leading to the same goal and there are various guides to that path are all founded on unestablished conceptions. Hence the gospel of every Master, affirming as it does, the nature of the final truth, the means and the goal of practice, is sure to be dogmatic and can in no way be asserted to be infallible.

CONCLUSION.

All religio-philosophical systems seek for positive and final answers to three principal questions,—(a) what is the ultimate truth; (b) what is the ultimate good, (c) what is the supreme duty in human life.

Some philosophers* are of opinion that the world of physical phenomena, originated and sustained and destroyed in accordance with the laws of nature, of which the conscious creatures including men are also natural products is the ultimate truth that can be known; they say that the world is the transformation of material atoms (non-momentory) of four kinds, viz., solid (earthy), vicid (watery), hot or luminiferous and volatile (aerial), that there is no immaterial self, that there is no God, that automatic origination (स्वभाववाद्) is the ultimate truth that can be known; that death being the inevitable end of life, there is no ultimate good to hope for after it ; that the supreme duty in life consists in making systematic efforts for the enjoyment of health and happiness, power and prosperity, so long as the bodily life continues, all ideas of virtue and vice which have reference to the soul and after-life being without foundation.

Some‡ have concluded that the absolute voidness and unsubstantiality of the entire universe of experience, including our own selves, is the ultimate truth to be known; that the realisation of this truth and the complete annihilation of the flow of the apparently permanent self is the ultimate good of life; and that the supreme duty

* The Chārvākas.

‡ Some Buddhist Nihilist.

consists in the practice of self-sacrifice, self-abnegation, suppression of desires and attachments and contemplation on the voidness of all things.

Some* think that a stream of momentary intelligences (consciousness) sustained by ignorance and desire constitutes the true nature of the self and the world, that there is no self as the support of consciousness, that there is no God as the creator and regulator of the world; that the cessation of the flow of momentary intelligences giving rise to and keeping up the consciousness of individuality is the ultimate good to be attained, and that the practice of self-sacrifice, self-restraint, self-abnegation, suppression of desires and attachments, and contemplation on the momentariness of all existences is the supreme duty.

Some‡ consider that the true nature of the universe consists of two series of momentary existences,—one subjective and another objective, the former knowing the latter through perception (according to one section among them) or through inference (according to another section). The objective series are produced by the natural combination of momentary atoms, which are of four kinds, viz. solid (पार्थिव), vicid (आप्य), hot (तैजस) and volatile (वायवीय). [According to this view, with regard to the aggregate of atoms, there is no difference of the part and the whole, hence the effect-world is not different or both different and non-different from the atoms, but it is non-different from them.] The subjective series is a flow of momentary consciousnesses conditioned and affected by the objective or physical series. These systems also conceive of the destruction of the misconception of the permanent self and

* Yogācāra Sect of the Buddhists.

‡ Sautrāntika and Vaivāṣika Sects of the Buddhists.

the permanence of objects as the ultimate good to be reached. The supreme duty accordingly consists in suitable practices for the realisation of the momentariness of the self and all existences and freedom from all desires and attachments.

All the above-mentioned systems deny the existence of God and permanent selves in their conception of the ultimate Truth. Some systems again* deny the existence of God, but admit that of permanent selves (modifying entity). They assert that the afore-said four kinds of atoms—the smallest indivisible portions of *Pudgalas*—are not of momentary existence, but real and permanent, and they are the material cause of the world. (The whole is not, according to them, altogether different from the parts not is it merely an aggregate of atoms, but different as well as non-different from them). They also hold that the finite selves of limited size are eternally existent, and it is their *Karma* which is the prime efficient cause of the world-process. This is their conception of the ultimate Truth. The ultimate good, according to them, is the attainment by each individual self of infinite and eternal bliss in a superhuman and supra-mundane region. The supreme duty, they hold, consists in the practice of non-attachment to all worldly objects, non-injury to all living creatures and certain forms of austerity and contemplation for ascent to the highest plane of existence.

Some‡ take the physical universe as ultimately made up of the combinations of four kinds (with odour, taste, colour and touch) of non-created permanent elementary

* Jaina-view.

‡ Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas.

atoms (the whole being in each case quite distinct from the parts), the individual selves as permanent spiritual entities distinct from bodies and minds (there is eternal all-pervading self having the attribute of intelligence absolutely different from self which is unmodified and self is consequently an unconscious entity), and God as the prime mover of the atoms and the sole regulator of all phenomena of the universe. The ultimate good, according to them, is the attainment by each self of an eternal state of perfect freedom from sorrow and joy and knowledge and activity. The supreme duty accordingly is the contemplation of the true nature of the self as distinct from the body and the mind, and the practice of detachment and self-restraint and purity.

Others* share the opinion that the above-mentioned atoms (not momentary but stable) are the ultimate material cause of the world, which is without beginning in time. According to this view, the selves also are eternal and infinite, and the destiny pertaining to them is the regulative and efficient cause, and there is no God. These advocates think that the performance of actions prescribed in the *Vedas* (combined with knowledge) is their chief duty and they hope thereby to bring about the cessation of sorrow.

Some‡ assert this world to be eternal as a flow, and hence there is none or nothing which is its efficient or material cause. They recognise the eternal existence of the selves, but not the existence of God. They think that the performance of the Vedic actions is their chief duty,

* Prabhākara–Mimāmsaka.

‡ Some old Mimāmsakas

and Heaven (स्वर्ग) or eternal joy is the ultimate ideal to be hoped for.

Some* recognise two essentially distinct, but eternally associated, self-existent Principles as the ultimate Truth of the universe, viz. one undifferentiated infinite Energy, called *Prakṛti*, and an infinite number of self-luminous, changeless and limitless selves, called *Puruṣa*. The Energy eternally evolves itself in the presence and in the interest of the selves into the diversified subjective and objective world, and is accordingly the root-material of the world. The existence of God as a self-existent Being and as either the material or the efficient cause of the world is not recognised. The ultimate good, according to them, is the realisation of the transcendent character of the self as distinguished from and unassociated with *Prakṛti* and its modifications and the attainment by the self of its essential eternal self-existent and self-luminous nature without any sorrow or joy or knowledge. The supreme duty of a man accordingly is the culture of philosophical wisdom for the realisation of this true character of the self, the cultivation of non-attachment to the bodily and mental functions and their objects, the suppression of the sense of ego and the meditation on the transcendent nature of the self.

Others‡ agree with the last-mentioned school in their conception about ultimate Truth, viz. the infinite number of selves phenomenally associated with one independent unconscious Energy which is the ultimate material cause of the world; but unlike that school they recognise the existence of One Supreme Puruṣa or God, Who, though neither the

*Sāṅkhyas.
‡Pātañjalas

efficient nor the material cause of the world, is eternally omniscient and self-realised and is the supreme object of worship and meditation. To them also the realisation of the pure self-existent transcendent character of the self unassociated with *Prakṛti* is the ultimate good; and for the attainment of this end the adoption of the prescribed eightfold means of self-restraint, self-purification, control over the body and the nervous system, suppression of desires, concentration of attention and above all contemplation and deep meditation on the pure nature of the self is regarded as the supreme duty.

Some* take the ultimate Truth to consist of Energy as the material cause of the world and God distinguished from and infinitely superior to the individual selves as the efficient cause. They maintain that the ultimate good is the attainment of the divine attributes by each self and freedom from all impurities and limitations caused by its connection with the world. For the realisation of this ideal devoted adherence to the special practices as prescribed in their sectarian scriptures (not Vedic) are regarded as their chief duty.

Some‡ hold the same opinion about the nature of God, world and the soul; but they esteem their special scriptures as authoritative in the matter of *Sādhanā*, and regard the culture of devotion and service to God with practices helpful to it as their chief duty. Their highest ideal is to dwell eternally in blissful relationship with God in His eternal supra-mundane abode.

Some† take the world including the selves as a product of God's free will (without any such material cause as the

* Pāśupata–Śaivas.. ‡ Mādhva Vaiṣṇavas.
† Non-Indian Religious Sects.

atom or the Energy) and consider faith and charity and prayer with purity of heart to be their chief duty. Their ultimate good is the attainment of eternal blessed life in the proximity of God in His Kingdom of Heaven, and this they hope to attain after the Day of Judgment, when God is expected to pass final judgment upon all selves at the same time in consideration of the merits and demerits acquired by them in the single human life which each of them lived on this earth.

Some* look upon Primordial Energy as the infinite inscrutable Power of God, having no separate existence from Him, and accordingly conceive God as the Absolute omnipotent omniscient Personality Who is the ultimate material and efficient cause of the universe. They regard the innumerable selves as atomic, eternal and conscious. They think that the practice of devotion is their chief duty and they hope to live eternally with God in a supramundane spiritual region.

Some‡ take God to be different as well as non-different from His effects—the self and the world—and reckon the practice of devotion with knowledge as their chief duty. Their supreme ideal is to become identified with the causal God.

Some† accept the attributeless non-dual consciousness as the sole ultimate Reality and an inexplicable cosmic Ignorance as the cause of the illusory appearance of the plurality of selves and the diversity of material objects. They think that the hearing, thinking and meditation

* Nimbārka, Rāmānuja, Caitanya and Vallabha.

‡ Tridandi Sect, Pratyavijñā and Śākta-Tantra.

† Śānkarites.

about the non-distinction between the Absolute and the individual is their chief duty and they hope to merge their individuality into that Reality as the ultimate Good to be attained.

Now, as the result of the critical study of the different systems and their underlying presuppositions, what should be our outlook with regard to these three fundamental questions of human life ? We could not accept the doctrine of causeless natural origination as sound, nor could we accept the absolute voidness of the universe as a rational conclusion, nor could the conception of the momentariness of all things without any substantial background satisfy our reason. None of the three forms of atomic theory could stand our logical scrutiny. The assumption that the world-process began at any point of time and will end at some future date has been found to be as unwarrantable as the doctrine that it is without a beginning and an end. The theory of Energy whether conceived as independent of or dependent on some one Supreme Spirit or any number of self-luminous spirits has not been found to be logically adequate and consistent. The theory of non-dual qualified Reality in every form breaks down when tested by logical criticism. The conception of one non-dual unqualified Reality with an inexplicable Ignorance also has not been found to be rationally maintainable as an adequate explanation of the universe.

We found that God cannot be proved to be a perfect all-knowing Person, but unconnected with the world-process. God cannot be logically inferred as either the efficient cause or as the material cause of the world, nor can He be taken as both the material and the effecient cause nor can Godhood be ascertained as due to cosmic Ignorance.

The same thing we shall put in a different way. The ultimate Reality must be either one or two or many. If one, it should be either mereconsciousness or a conscious Person, or an unconscious Principle or a Being both conscious as well as unconscious. According to the view of non-dual pure consciousness, the unconscious world in its cause-effect-aspect will be an illusory manifestation of the said consciousness. According to the view of the non-dual unconscious Principle, consciousness will be the outcome or modification of unconsciousness. According to the view that the non-dual Reality is both conscious and unconscious, the unconscious universe will be the manifestation of Its Energy or attribute, which is Its unconscious aspect. According to the view that the Absolute Reality is a self-conscious Personality, He is regarded as manifesting Himself into the world or creating the world out of Himself and also eternally immanent in and transcendent above this world-system. According to the theory that there are two Realities one may be pure consciousness and another may be purely unconscious, or one may be endowed with consciousness, and the other purely unconscious. According to the view that Reality is many, these may be either purely conscious or purely unconscious, or some endowed with consciousness, and others without it. All these different views we have examined in this Book and found them logically untenable. We have applied the logical test to the various conceptions about God, the ultimate object o religious worship to all the theistic sects, and we have found that all of them fail to satisfy the tests.

If the world be the aggregate of momentary atoms, or if it be the transformation of stable atoms regulated by some unconscious Moral Law, or if it be ultimately the modification or manifested form of some unconscious

Cosmic Energy (unmanifest) which begins to act of itself, then there is no necessity for recognising God (conscious Principle) as the ultimate cause of the world. Our recognition of the existence of God may be supposed to be the product of the direct experience of God, or of logical inference from the nature of the world of internal or external experience, or of the infallible authority of the Scriptures, or of the consciousness of subjective necessity. The first three sources have been found to be unacceptable to a rational mind and incapable of establishing the existence of God. Hence we can fall back upon the fourth alternative. But from mere subjective necessity, which also is not universally felt, only a conception of one God may be formed and cultured, but the objective reality of God as an independent Entity cannot be proved. Such a God would have conceptual or ideal existence, and would not be proved to be a real existence. He would be an object of faith, and not of knowledge. The sincere recognition of such an eternal infinite perfect Being as the absolute Reality and the sole creator, sustainer, regulator and support of this phenomenal universe, the systematic contemplation and meditation on His ideal character and the earnest attempt to put our life in tune with this cherished conception may be of great practical importance in giving a sense of satisfaction to the innermost subjective demands of nature. As a result of such discipline, there may ultimately arise a feeling within us that we have actually experienced God or become united with Him. But all these cannot amount to the valid knowledge of God as a Being existing independently of our conception. But as the demand for an adequate causal explanation of the world of our sense-experience and of the phenomena of our consciousness is inherent in our reason and as such adequate explanation is

not found in any other phenomenal or noumenal entity, this God of our conception and faith is alone believed to supply this explanation in spite of the logical difficulties in the way of perfect proof. Hence the God of faith is accepted as the God of knowledge.

Now about the world. The world may be unproduced or produced. If produced, it may be the product of creation or manifestation, and its cause may be consciousness or anything endowed with consciousness or unconscious something, be it one or many. These alternatives have already been refuted. Besides, we found that the world can be ascertained neither as existent, nor as non-existent, nor as both nor as different from both, nor as anything beyond all these alternatives. Every view has been found to be faulty. Besides these, we cannot discover any conclusion which may be defectless. Metaphysics is based on a few fundamental concepts such as existence, non-existence, existence as well as non-existence, or a category different from these three, or difference, non-difference, difference as well as non-difference, or a category distinct from these three, and it is bound to deal with these concepts in conformity with the principles of formal logic. In terms of these categories we can think of no metaphysical theory which is not included in any one of the alternatives mentioned in the Book. But we have found that none of them can be accepted as free from logical fallacies.

Now about the nature of the self. We found that it could not be determined as momentary or stable. In case it is regarded as stable, it may be thought of as atomic or of the size of the body or all–pervading (many or one). All these alternatives have been refuted. It cannot be said to be momentary consciousness or the stable support (the

substance) of knowledge which is taken as either attribute or modification, or to be consciousness–unconsciousness (substance-knowledge), or many isolated consciousnesses (knowledge only), or non-dual consciousness. So much for the question about the ultimate Truth—"what can we know". Man has a consciousness of self as knowing, he finds a world present before him, which acts upon him and stimulates his faculty of knowing, and he has the idea of some Supernatural Reality behind the phenomena of the world. But we find that the questions which arise in his reason about the self, the world and that Supernatural Reality are incapable of being finally answered in terms of the ultimate logical categories. Hence the ultimate demand of knowledge is found destined to remain forever unsatisfied.

Now, about the two other fundamental questions of human life. Man is by nature a conscious active creature, and his relation to the external world always stimulates him to action. Being endowed with the faculty of reasoning, he is always troubled with the question, what he should do and what he should not do. He becomes actuated by the idea that he has the freedom to do or not to do according to his desire and thought, though he finds that his attempts are on many occasions baffled and that his freedom is restricted by the powers of his living and non-living environments and the imperfections of his own powers. This consciousness of restricted freedom together with the ideas of what is desirable and what is undesirable brings forth in his mind the notions of duty, obligation and responsibility. He learns to feel that he has some duties to perform, that he is under obligation to perform them and that he is responsible for their due performance.

As a sensuous creature, man has certain natural demands of the body and inclinations or propensities of the mind, and these naturally rouse his desires and move him to particular kinds of activities. But his duties are not found to be confined to them. He imbibes his ideas of what is desirable (what ought to be desired) and what is undesirable (i. e. what ought not to be desired) from his environments, his education, the traditions in which he is brought up, the conventional rules which are enforced upon him. Accordingly, certain kinds of objects and ideals and certain types of actions conducive to the attainment of them are learnt to be regarded as good, and correspondingly certain other kinds of objects and actions are learnt to be considered as bad. In this way, the notions of right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and vice, merit and demerit, etc. occupy his mind and regulate his actions.

These ideas grow in the society and influence the activities of its members, and they take various forms and colours under the pressure of the circumstances through which the society has to pass. For this reason we find that though these ideas of right and wrong, good and bad, virtue and vice, duty and prohibition, etc. are found in every community of men, many objects and ideals which are admired and pursued as good and desirable by one community are condemned and abandoned as evil and undesirable by another, and many actions and practices which are regarded as right, virtuous and meritorious by one portion of the human society are considered as positively wrong, sinful and criminal by another portion. Even in the same community of men, the ideas about duty and virtue are found to change according to the changes of social, political and economic

circumstances and to the development or degradation of physical and mental powers and capacities.

In the ordinary normal life of any society, these ideas of what should be desired and what not, what ought to be done and what ought to be refrained from, what ought to be rewarded and what ought to be punished, have no metaphysical basis, and the individuals, scarcely trouble their head and heart to find out their philosophical explanation with reference to the ultimate goal of human life and the ultimate truth about the soul, the world and God. The ideas enter into their mind from the social atmosphere and they pursue them in good faith. When with the change of the social atmosphere, the ideas change, they accept the changes also without much murmur.

It is the few exceptionally talented and philosophically minded men, who devote their intellectual and spiritual energy to the discovery of the ultimate goal of human life and to the determination of the duties and virtues with a view to the realisation of that *summum bonum.* They give a lower place to the conventional duties of men's domestic, social, political and economic life, which are necessarily different for different men, on account of differences of circumstances and conventions. But they seek for finding out some plan of life and some mode of discipline, which are expected to satisfy permanently the innermost hankering of the essential nature of all men and to solve the ultimate problem of human life.

But we have found by the analysis and criticism of all the types of solutions, arrived at by the greatest thinkers and spiritual teachers, belonging to the various systems of philosophy and religion, that none of them could satisfactorily answer the questions which the logical

intellect of man may put to them. The wide divergences, in the most fundamental characteristics, among the solutions arrived at by the teachers of the different systems of philosophy and religion, corroborate this conclusion of ours. Hence the problems with regard to the ultimate ideal of life and the supreme duty of man as man remain unsolved even by the philosophical speculations and the spiritual realisations of the greatest teachers of men.

Let us deal with the questions of the ultimate good and the supreme duty a little more closely. Man naturally feels himself to be a self-conscious and self-determining person. However restricted his power of self-determination may be, he acts voluntarily; he freely chooses his course of activities so far as it lies in his power. All voluntary actions are purposive actions. No man deliberately proceeds to the performance of any action without the desire and hope for the attainment of any end or object. In ordinary life a man pursues the ends or objects or ideals, which the society to which he belongs regards as valuable or desirable or which he regards as necessary for the preservation and comfort of his physical existence or for the increase of his powers and splendours or for which he has special inclinations and tastes. Thus men are found to act voluntarily for food and drink, for clothing and shelter, for health and happiness, for wealth and fame, for arts and amusements, for culture and education, for similar desirable objects affecting the interests of their kith and kin, and sometimes those affecting the interests of the society and the race. All these are objects which have reference to our earthly life, which are known to be the sources of pleasure and happiness, and which we are taught to value by the society. These are the objects which we generally seek for and hope for in our ordinary life.

Man, being endowed with the power of foresight always feels interested about what will happen in near or distant future and always tries to make provision for the future. He thinks about the more and more distant future with the increase of his foresight. At certain stages of the development of his life, he cannot rest contended with the provision for the pleasure and happiness of the present earthly life; but he thinks of what will happen after death, and how he can make provision for life after death,—if of course there be any continuity of existence after physical death. What will occur after death becomes a matter of greater and greater practical interest, when men feel the pangs of separation at the death of their near relatives and find the uncertainity of this earthly life, which may come to an end at any moment. It is the natural attachment to the continuity of the life of themselves and of those they love, that creates in the minds of men in general a natural bent for believing in post-mortal existence. There are many phenomena, which appear to be of a supra-normal and supernatural character and which go to confirm and strengthen this belief. When this belief in the continuity of existence after physical death takes hold of the mind, the interests in the conditions of existence after death become strong, and the thoughts about making provision for the comfort and happiness in those states of existence become matters of paramount importance. Accordingly various conceptions are formed with regard to the nature and form of existence after dissociation from the gross material body, various hypotheses are framed about the relations between the modes of life here on earth and the modes of enjoyment and suffering in the other world, and various rituals, practices and rules of duties and prohibitions come into vogue and become prevalent in the different communities of

men as suitable means for the attainment of happiness, comfort and desirable environments in the life after death. Thus apart from what we seek and hope for in this life, we learn to seek and hope for better and higher and more lasting good in future life.

Such belief in and hope for greater and more permanent enjoyments after death becomes a source of great solace and comfort in this life as well. If we regulate our life in a way which is believed to be conducive to the attainment of the higher and more abiding good in future life, our heart becomes soothed with the idea that our losses and bereavements, sufferings and sacrifices in this life will be more than compensated for in the long long life after death.

These beliefs and expectations are not originally based on any metaphysical speculation. But the men gifted with higher orders of intellectual powers come forward to inquire into the validity of these beliefs and hopes, analyse the implications underlying them, and criticise them logically from the philosophical point of view. As a result of such speculations, some thinkers reject the possibility of existence after death, and others try to systematise these beliefs and place them on a rational ground. These latter also are found to arrive at different conclusions with regard to the nature of existence after death, the course of the destinies of the disembodied beings, and the efficacy of the different kinds of actions in this life for the improvement of their lot hereafter. These divergences of conclusions are closely connected with their metaphysical views with regard to the self, the world and the Absolute Reality.

But men with philosophical temperaments cannot rest contented merely with speculations about the future states of existence. As they seek to form definite conceptions about the ultimate nature of the self, the world and the Absolute Reality, so they try to arrive at a definite idea about the ultimate ideal or good the self is capable of realising, and to prescribe a systematic course of moral and spiritual discipline for the realisation of that ideal. These ideas about what we can ultimately hope for and how we can attain it must necessarily be in accordance with our essential nature and our ultimate relation to the universe as a whole and to the Absolute Reality, if any, behind it, and must therefore depend upon the ultimate metaphysical conclusions we accept as final. The metaphysical conclusions of different schools of philosophy and religion being different and conflicting, their conceptions about the highest good attainable to man and the most suitable means to its attainment must also be different and conflicting. We have actually found such differences and conflicts in course of our discussion about the doctrines of *Sādhanā* and Liberation. As a result of our criticism of the different religio-metaphysical systems we have been convinced that none of the metaphysical conclusions of the different sects can be accepted as based on unassailable logical grounds; and our critical examination of the doctrines of *Sādhanā* and Liberation has shown that none of the conflicting ideas about the *summum bonum* of human life and about the methods of attaining it can be accepted as standing on rationally solid foundation.

What is then the position to which this comparative and critical study of the divergent systems of Philosophy and Religion leads us with regard to the ultimate problems of our theoretical and practical life? As rational beings

we feel an inherent demand for the knowledge of absolute truth ; as self-determining beings we feel an urge for the realisation of some supreme ideal by dint of our self-chosen and self-regulated activities; as living beings we have a hankering for the enjoyment of immortal and blissful life. We look to philosophers and religious teachers for our guidance. Philosophers are expected to teach us by rational arguments what is true and what is good. Religious teachers are expected to teach us in the light of their spiritual experience how we should regulate our inner and outer activities, so that we may practically realise what is true and good and enjoy unalloyed and unending happiness. But what do we find when we make a comparative study of and thoughtfully reflect upon the metaphysical speculations of the philosophers and the spiritual intuitions of the holy men ? The result appears to be disappointing. They do not arrive at any unanimous conclusion, and the position of each is contradicted by the rest. When by the exercise of our own reason we try to find out if any one of these views can be accepted as final, we discover that there is none which can stand logical tests. When by the application of our power of meditation we try to find out if any clue to the ultimate Truth and Good can be obtained from that source, we are equally disappointed.

The human reason is placed in an unavoidably perplexing situation on earth. It is faced with diverse kinds of phenomena, which it cannot deny. But it refuses to be contented with accepting them merely as they appear before it. It seeks for an explanation of them, and in seeking for this explanation it goes beyond them. But when it attempts to comprehend that 'beyond' in terms of its recognised concepts and to substantiate it by the means

at its command, it is entangled in various difficulties from which it is unable to extricate itself. Thus it is in a fix.

Let us clarify the position with some examples. The human reason has an inherent demand for finding out the cause of whatever phenomena appear before it. It cannot accept the phenomena as self-caused and self-existent. There must be some cause for every phenomenon that occurs. The phenomena are not regarded as thoroughly understood, till their origin is traced to some cause or causes. Now, the world, which faces it, is found to be a world of phenomena. Hence it proceeds to be acquainted with the true nature of the world, with the unshakable fundamental assumption that there must be some cause of this world. When it endeavours to determine the nature of the cause, the questions arise, whether it is one or many, whether it is conscious or unconscious, whether it is one absolute differenceless Reality or it is the combination of several co-operating self-existent entities, whether it is infinite or finite, whether it is with forms and attributes or without forms and attributes, whether it is changeable or unchangeable or unchangeable through changes, and so on. Whatever conclusion it may arrive at is found to be incapable of satisfactorily meeting the objections which it itself raises against it. It shifts its position, passes from one conclusion to another, but similar unanswerable objections arise. Similarly, when the human reason contemplates upon the wonderful order and adjustment, the reign of law and uniformity in the different departments of this vast complicated system of the world, it is so much impressed that it cannot but think that the world is created and regulated with a design and purpose. The notion of design and purpose leads to the conception of a designer and regulator, who must be omnipotent and omniscient. But

in this case also, similar logical difficulties arise and baffle the attempt of the reason to meet and conquer them. Thus it can neither shake off the idea that the world must have a cause and a regulator nor can it be satisfied with any definite conception which it forms about the nature of the cause and regulator. In this way the human reason marches on, but it reaches no destination. This is what the history of philosophical speculation in the human society illustrates.

Take another example. Every man is psychologically conscious of his own personal identity in the midst of all physical and mental changes, and every man also unquestionably admits the similar personal identity of others. Reason seeks for an explanation of this identity. What must there be, which can preserve this identity of personality in spite of such radical changes that we observe? This question of identity arises not only with regard to personality. We recognise the identity between the seed and the tree that is found to grow out of it, between the just-born animal-child and the gigantic animal into which it grows. What is the source of this identity ? Reason cannot but think of a permanent soul, which remains unchanged in the midst of all physical and psychical changes, which keeps together and organises all these changing elements, and which enables reason to regard all these changes as not presenting separate entities, but as belonging to the same entity. But here again when it tries to form a definite conception of this source of identity of a living being, it is faced with logical difficulties, which it fails to overcome. As the riddle with regard to the nature of the soul or the self, or whatever the source of the identity may be called, remains unsolved, so the riddle with regard to the

ultimate destiny or the final goal of human life also remains unsolved to the limited understanding of men.

Take a third example. Man is a self-conscious active being. He acts deliberately and with purposes in view. His entire active life is based on the fundamental assumption that his action has the capacity to produce the desired consequences, and that he will be able to reap the fruits of his activities. If this relation between a man's actions and the desired consequences be not admitted, if a man cannot confidently expect to achieve the proximate or remote ends, which he has in view, by means of the actions performed by him, then the voluntary activities would be impossible. It is sometimes found that actions are performed long ago and their consequences are achieved long afterwards. But the relation is traced between them. This idea of the relation between actions and consequences again leads reason to suppose that the world-order is such as is favourable for this correspondence between actions and consequences. In this way the human reason is led to the conception of the world as a moral order in which the principle of justice reigns, and to the idea of the *law of Karma* operating in it, which gives every man what is due to him on account of his actions. Reason even extends its application to life after death. It finds in the conception of the *law of Karma* a suitable means to account for many of the differences of enjoyments and sufferings, difference of powers and inclinations, differences of favourable and of unfavourable circumstances among different men. But here again, when the human reason attempts to definitely formulate the *law of Karma* and to rationally substantiate the conception of the moral order of the universe, serious objections arise, many actual facts of injustice and cases of undeserving happiness and misery in the world of experience contradict the

belief in this law and order, and the reason fails to meet the objections and to discover any solution for the discrepancies. Hence the human reason is again puzzled and perplexed. This is found to be the case with the human reason in respect of all the ultimate problems with which it is faced.

What then should be our attitude ? The only rational and justifiable attitude appears to be this, that the mystery about the ultimate problems of our knowledge and life must remain a mystery and be recognised as the mystery. The inevitable destiny, to which the human understanding seems bound to submit is that it should stand amazed before the mysterious universe of experience, it should naturally feel an urge from within to attempt a rational solution of the mystery, and in this attempt it should be more and more deeply and widely acquainted with mysteries within mysteries and mysteries above mysteries, and that this acquaintance will tempt it for further and further search, and ultimately it should surrender itself to the consciousness that the mysery is insoluble.

ERRATA

1. Page 437 line 13.
   for salvation read saltation
2. Page 510 line 10.
   after are read non-contradictory or
3. Page 516 line 1.
   for knowmness read unknowmness
4. Page 547 line 1.
   for (b) read (d)
5. Page 550 line 8
   for (c) read (e)
6. Page 690 line 14.
   for of read or

INDEX TO Vol. II.